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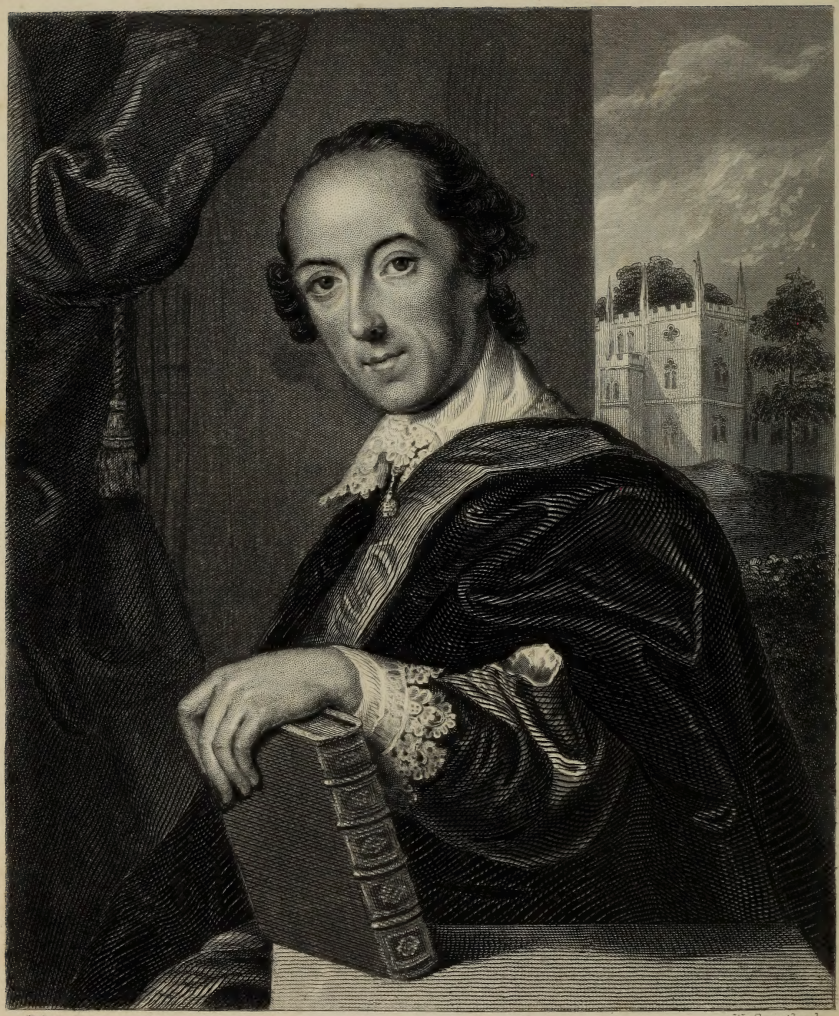
THE

Letters of Horace Walpole

VOLUME VIII.


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HORACE WALPOLE.

(Youngest Son of Sir Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford.)

FROM THE ORIGINAL FORMERLY AT STRAWBERRY HILL.

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THE LETTERS

OF

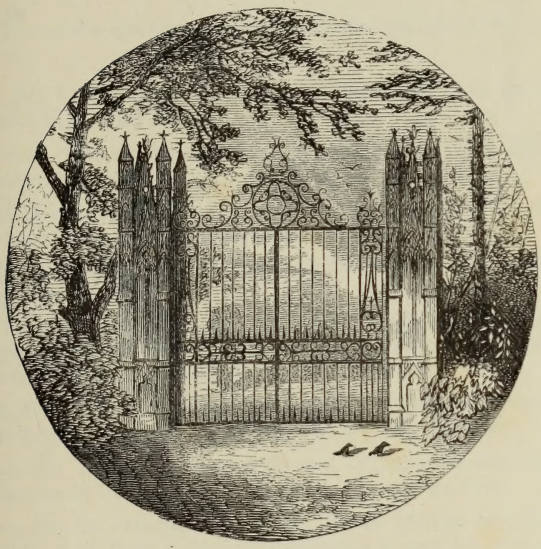
HORACE WALPOLE

FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD

EDITED BY

PETER CUNNINGHAM

Now First Chronologically Arranged



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THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE.

2005. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 7, 1781.

I WILL not leave you a moment in suspense about the safety of your very valuable [MS.] volume, which you have so kindly sent me, and which I have just received, with the enclosed letters, and your other yesterday. I have not time to add a word more at present, being full of business, having the night before last received an account of Lady Orford's death at Pisa, and a copy of her Will, which obliges me to write several letters, and to see my relations. She has left everything in her power to her *friend* Cavalier Mozzi, at Florence; but her son comes into a large estate, besides her great jointure. You may imagine, how I lament that he had not patience to wait sixteen months, before he sold his pictures!

I am very sorry you have been at all indisposed. I will take the utmost care of your fifty-ninth volume (for which I give you this receipt), and will restore it the instant I have had time to go through it. Witness my hand.

2006. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Feb. 9, 1781.

I HAD not time, dear Sir, when I wrote last, to answer your letter, nor do more than cast an eye on your manuscript. To say

the truth, my patience is not tough enough to go through Wolsey's negotiations. I see that *your* perseverance was forced to make the utmost efforts to transcribe them. They are immeasurably verbose, not to mention the blunders of the first copyist. As I read only for amusement, I cannot, so late in my life, purchase information on what I do not much care about, at the price of a great deal of *ennui*. The old wills at the end of your volume diverted me much more than the obsolete politics. I shall say nothing about what you call *your old leaven*. Everybody must judge for himself in those matters: nor are you or I of an age to change long-formed opinions, as neither of us is governed by self-interest.

Pray tell me how I may most safely return your volume. I value all your manuscripts so much, that I should never forgive myself, if a single one came to any accident, by your so obligingly lending them to me. They are great treasures, and contain something or other that must suit most tastes; not to mention your amazing industry, neatness, legibility, with notes, arms, &c. I know no such repositories. You will receive with your manuscript Mr. Kerrich's and Mr. Gough's letters. The former is very kind. The inauguration of the *Antiquated* Society is burlesque,—and so is their dearth of materials for another volume: can they ever want such rubbish as compose their preceding annals?

I think it probable, that *story* should be *stone:* however, I never piqued myself on recording every mason. I have preserved but too many that did not deserve to be mentioned. I dare to say, that when I am gone, many more such will be added to my volumes. I had not heard of poor Mr. Pennant's misfortune.[1] I am very sorry for it, for I believe him to be a very honest good-natured man. He certainly was too lively for his proportion of understanding, and too impetuous to make the best use of what he had. However, it is a credit to us antiquaries to have one of our class disordered by vivacity. I hope your goutiness is dissipated, and that this last fine week has set you on your feet again.

[1] "I hear Mr. Pennant is un peu dérangé . . . He had too many things in his head to keep it cool and sedate." *Cole to Walpole*, 3 *Feb.* 1781. (*MS.*)—Cunningham.

2007. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 9, 1781.

THE lost sheep is found; but I have more joy in one just person than in ninety and nine sinners that do not repent; in short, the renegade Gibbon is returned to me, after ten or eleven weeks, and pleads having been five of them at Bath. I immediately forgave even his return; yet pray do not imagine that I write to announce this recovery; no! it is to impart what he told me. He says that somebody asked Johnson if he was not afraid that *you* would resent the freedoms he has taken with Gray, "*No, no, Sir; Mr. Mason does not like rough handling.*" I hope in the 'Muses' that you will let him see which had most reason to fear rough handling. The saucy Caliban! I don't know when I shall get you his blubber,[1] but I have sent again to my bookseller about it.

I have restored your 'Fresnoy' with regret. The more I have studied it the better I like it—it will always be standard. I repeat that there is the precise sense of every sentence, and yet they are not translated. They are like the same pair of legs, before being taught to dance and afterwards. Fresnoy gives the precepts, and you tell him how to state and enounce them. As I have ambition of appertaining to your poem, I humbly beg leave to amend one word, in a certain line towards the end; for

"Sons of her choice and *sharers* of her fire,"

read "partners."

You will laugh, especially after my last letter, when I tell you that I am chosen Honorary Member of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland. I received the notification since I began this letter. Lord Buchan, the founder (under the patronage of Saint Bute), was many years ago a little my acquaintance; I have not even seen him at least these dozen years, nor ever had any correspondence with him but once, about two years ago, when he wrote to ask me what portraits of Scottish kings or queens I knew of in England.[2] It is impossible to have less respect than I have for Societies of Antiquaries, who seldom do anything but grow antiquated themselves. However, as an honorary title exacts neither function nor *vote*, I have accepted it civilly, especially as it will show

[1] That is, his 'Life of Gray.'—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] See Letter, 24 December, 1778, vol. vii. p. 156.—CUNNINGHAM.

contempt for our own fools, from amongst whom I scratched out my name. However, I conceive that the bones of my memory may some time or other be dug up and burned at Edinburgh, as Peter Martyr's were at Oxford.

My new dignity of F. S. S. A. will not comport with amusing Mr. Palgrave to-day. I have taken an oath on Ossian to have no imagination, no invention; for forgeries are *in*tentions, not in-*ven*tions. Still I shall not wear my new plaid robes and blue bonnet beyond my inauguration week, and shall soon relapse into a South Briton; though if I should say *The* 15, *The* 45, you will remember my connection north of the Tweed.

P.S. Is not it droll that I, who never sought for, canvassed for, or received any mark of distinction in my days, should receive a compliment from Edinburgh?

2008. TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 10, 1781.

I WAS honoured yesterday with your Lordship's card, with the notification of the additional honour of my being elected an honorary member of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland;[1] a grace, my Lord, that I receive with the respect and gratitude due to so valuable a distinction; and for which I must beg leave, through your Lordship's favour, to offer my most sincere and humble thanks to that learned and respectable Society.

My very particular thanks are still more due to your Lordship, who, in remembrance of ancient partiality, have been pleased at the hazard of your own judgment, to favour an old humble servant, who can only receive honour from, but can reflect none on, the Society into which your Lordship and your associates have condescended to adopt him. In my best days, my Lord, I never could pretend to more than having flitted over some flowers of knowledge. Now worn out and near the end of my course, I can only be a broken monument to prove that the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland are zealous to preserve even the least valuable remains of a former age, and to recompense all who have contributed their mite towards illustrating our common island. I am, &c.

[1] The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland had been formed at Edinburgh in the preceding December, when the Earl of Buchan was elected president.—WRIGHT.

2009. TO SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE.

Strawberry Hill, Feb. 10, 1781.

I WAS very intimate, Sir, with the last Lord Finlater when he was Lord Deskfoord. We became acquainted at Rome on our travels, and though, during his illness and long residence in Scotland, we had no intercourse, I had the honour of seeing him sometimes during his last visit to England; but I am an entire stranger to the anecdote relative to my father and Sir William Windham. I have asked my brother [Sir Edward], who was much more conversant in the scenes of that time; for I was abroad when [1740] Sir William died, and returned to England but about six months before my father's retirement, so that having been at school and at Cambridge, or in my infancy, during Sir Robert's administration, the little I retain from him was picked up in the last three years of his life, which is an answer, Sir, to your inquiries why, among other reasons, I have always declined writing his Life; for I could in reality say but little on my own knowledge; and yet should have the air of being good authority, at least better than I should truly be. My brother, Sir Edward, who is eleven years older than I am, never heard of your anecdote. I may add, that latterly I lived in great intimacy with the Marchioness of Blandford, (Sir William's widow,) who died but a year and a half ago at Sheene, here in my neighbourhood; and with Lady Suffolk, who could not but be well acquainted with the history of those times from her long residence at Court, and with whom, for the last five or six years of her life here at Twickenham, I have had many and many long conversations on those subjects, and yet I never heard a word of the supposed event you mention. I myself never heard Sir W. Windham speak but once in the House of Commons, but have always been told that his style and behaviour were most liberal and like a gentleman; and my brother says, there never passed any bitterness or acrimony between him and our father.

I will answer you as fairly and candidly, Sir, about Archibald Duke of Argyll, of whom I *saw* at least a great deal. I do believe Sir Robert had a full opinion of his abilities as a most useful man. In fact, it is plain he had; for he depended on the Duke, when Lord Islay, for the management of your part of the island, and, as I have heard at the time, disobliged the most firm of the Scottish Whigs by

that preference. Sir Robert supported Lord Islay against the Queen herself, who hated him for his attachment to Lady Suffolk; and he was the only man of any consequence whom her Majesty did not make feel how injudicious it was (however novel) to prefer the interest of the mistress to that of the wife. On my father's defeat, his warm friends loudly complained of Lord Islay as having betrayed the Scottish boroughs, at the election of Sir Robert's last Parliament, to his brother, Duke John. It is true, too, that Sir Robert always replied, "I do not accuse him." I must own, knowing my father's manner, and that when he said but little, it was *not* a favourable symptom, I did think, that if he *would* not accuse, at least he did not acquit. Duke Archibald was undoubtedly a dark shrewd man. I recollect an instance, for which I should not choose to be quoted just at this moment, though it reflects on nobody living. I forget the precise period, and even some of the persons concerned; but it was in the minority of the present Duke of Gordon, and you, Sir, can probably adjust the dates. A regiment had been raised of Gordons. Duke Archibald desired the command of it to a favourite of his own. The Duchess-dowager insisted on it for her second husband. Duke A. said, "Oh! to be sure, her Grace must be obeyed;" but instantly got the regiment ordered to the East Indies, which had not been the reckoning of a widow remarried to a young fellow.

At the time of the Rebellion, I remember that Duke Archibald was exceedingly censured in London for coming thither, and pleading that he was not empowered to take up arms. But I believe I have more than satisfied your curiosity, Sir, and that you will not think it very prudent to set an old man on talking of the days of his youth.

I have just received the favour of a letter from Lord Buchan, in which his Lordship is so good as to acquaint me with the honour your new Society of Antiquarians have done me in nominating me an honorary member. I am certainly much flattered by the distinction, but am afraid his Lordship's partiality and patronage will in this only instance do him no credit. My knowledge even of British antiquity has ever been desultory and most superficial; I have never studied any branch of science deeply and solidly, nor ever but for temporary amusement, and without any system, suite, or method. Of late years I have quitted every connection with societies, not only Parliament, but those of our Antiquaries and of Arts and Sciences, and have not attended the meetings of the Royal Society. I have withdrawn myself in a great measure from the world, and live in a very narrow circle idly and obscurely. Still, Sir, I could not decline the honour

your Society has been pleased to offer me, lest it should be thought a want of respect and gratitude, instead of a mark of humility and conscious unworthiness. I am so sensible of this last, that I cannot presume to offer my services in this part of our island to so respectable an assembly; but if you, Sir, who know too well my limited abilities, can at any time point out any information that is in my power to give to the Society, (as in the case of Royal Scottish portraits, on which Lord Buchan was pleased to consult me,) I shall be very proud to obey your and their commands, and shall always be with great regard their and your most obedient humble servant.

P.S. I do not know whether I ever mentioned to you or Lord Buchan,[1] Sir, a curious and excellent head in oil of the Lady Margaret Douglas at Mr. Carteret's, at Hawnes in Bedfordshire, the seat of his grandfather, Lord Granville; I know few better portraits. It is at once a countenance of goodness and cunning, a mixture I think pleasing. It seems to imply that the person's virtue was not founded on folly or ignorance of the world; it implies perhaps more, that the person would combat treachery and knavery, and knew how. I could fancy the head in question was such a character as Margaret Queen of Navarre, sister of Francis the First, who was very free in her conversations and writings, yet strictly virtuous; debonnaire, void of ambition; yet a politician when her brother's situation required it. If your Society should give into engraving historic portraits, this head would deserve an early place. There is at Lord Scarborough's, in Yorkshire, a double portrait, (perhaps by Holbein or Lucas de Heere,) of Lady Margaret's mother, Queen Margaret, and her second husband.

2010. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night, Feb. 11, 1781.

On Friday evening I received the probate of Lady Orford's Will, and your two letters, in one of which you mention the doubts of the Florentine lawyers on the validity of the disposition. I was very sorry to hear of these doubts, and shall consider well—nay, consult the most conscientious persons I can,—before I acquaint my Lord with them. I do not like questioning of wills where the intention

[1] He had to Lord Buchan. See letter of 24th Dec., 1778.—Cunningham.

of the testator is evident; nor are there many cases in which I should approve of it, except on strong suspicions of foul practices, or notorious incapacity of the deceased. Though I could have no esteem for Lady Orford, I shall be extremely averse from being even an indirect instrument of disputing her Will; and, should I be advised in duty to inform my Lord of the cavil, I shall, I think, desire you to convey the notice to him through some other channel. Nothing but my becoming persuaded that I ought to acquaint him with the doubts on the validity, shall make me contribute to his knowing them. I shall consult General Conway, who is conscience itself; and Lord Camden, who, though a lawyer, has left off business, and who, I trust, is too old to think merely as a lawyer, unless as one who has presided in a court of *equity*.

Lord Orford may act by me as he pleases, or, poor man! as his creatures please. I will neither pay court to him, for he has used me with extravagant ingratitude; nor ever do but what is strictly right about him, as I have always done, with a degree of delicacy that worldly prudence would condemn, and which certainly has been very prejudicial to my family. But I cannot lament what I did from principle and tenderness; nor can I vindicate myself to the world so fully as I might, while he has such a measure of sense as would be wounded if I talked too openly of his madness. It is plain that he, who, with no semblance of a quarrel to me, can treat me in so injurious a manner, after such tried services and repeated obligations, must have had the most abominable lies told him of me. I will indubitably take the first occasion that shall present itself of making my whole conduct towards him known, and that of his creatures. I care not a rush about his fortune, but I will not part with my character, which I prefer to all he has; and had much rather lose the former, were it likely to come to me, than the latter.

I know no news—in fact I have been entirely taken up with this affair. The accession of fortune to my Lord makes not the slightest change in my resolutions, it rather strengthens them; for I should despise myself if his additional wealth could make me stoop to flatter a madman.

P.S. Poor Lady Dick[1] is dead, and Mrs. [Anne] Pitt; the latter in a madhouse.

[1] Wife of Sir John Dick, formerly consul at Leghorn.—WALPOLE.

2011. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Monday night, Feb. 19, 1781.

It has not been from want of materials, if I had chosen to work them up, that I have not written to you very lately; but though I hold it delectable enough in one's dotage to prattle and gossip of the doings of the courts of one's younger days, I do not think it so decorous to invert one's Brantôme-hood and limp after and repeat the tattle of drawing-rooms that are scarce fledged. A sovereign may be philosopher or concentred enough in his own rays to disregard terrestrial tempests, and to be more occupied by the spots in his own orbit than by the mouldering away of his empire. For my part I have too much mortal clay about me to soar so much above matter, and to divert myself only with the music or discord of the spheres.

All this tedious proem is but to say that I have not wanted news, ay, and news that employs this whole town, if I would have condescended to tell you who has or who has not been at Cumberland House, or at the Queen's ball, or how King George and his brother, Duke Henry, have quarrelled about the servants of the Prince of Wales not being suffered to dine with His Royal Highness Duke Henry, and how Duke Henry was not invited to the ball at the Queen's House, with a deal of such scimble scamble stuff, which has totally obliterated the memory of all the wars that we have with all the world. Do not be surprised; if we attended to any thing above such puerilities, we should not be in the situation we are. I still do believe that distress will at last open our eyes, but I believe too, that we shall soon shut them again. There is not energy enough left in us to produce any effect. One may judge from the *nature* of our dissipations as much as from the dissipation itself. The age that souses into every amusement and folly that is presented to it, has not imagination enough to strike out anything of itself. Mrs. Cornelys, Almack, and Dr. Graham are forced to advertise diversions by public sale, and everybody goes indolently and mechanically to them all, without choice or preference. They who are *called the people of fashion* or the *ton* have contributed nothing of their own but *being too late;* nay, actually do go to most public diversions after they are over. Your Yorkshire Reformers, though not content with Mr. Burke's Bill, will gather no prophetic

comfort from the treatment it received to-day. I was at Mrs Delany's this evening, when Mr. Frederic Montagu arrived from the House. They had put off the second reading till Friday, because Wednesday is the fast day, and Thursday Vestris's benefit. God has his day, a French dancer his, and then the national senate will be at leisure to think whether it will save three-halfpence-farthing out of eighteen millions that are to be raised in hopes of protracting the war, till we want at least eighteen millions more.

Was not you edified with the last Gazette? When we expected to hear that all Washington's army was catched in a drag-net, and that Lord Cornwallis had subdued and pacified all Virginia and Carolina, we were modestly told that his Lordship and his handful of men had been sick, but, thank you, are a little better; and that Colonel Ferguson was beaten, and Colonel Tarleton had had a puny advantage; all which we knew two months ago.

To-day we are very sorry for what however we do not care a straw about. Well, the grand fleet, that was to fetch home Gibraltar and place it out of harm's way in the Isle of Sky, cannot sail. Governor Johnstone, the honestest man in the world, has written to Lord Hillsborough (for he would not trust Lord Sandwich, whom a fortnight ago he thought the second man in honesty in *South* Britain) complaining that the fleet is rotten, and cannot sail; nay, he has sent up a yard and a half of worm-eaten plank, which he humbly begs his Majesty himself will taste and be convinced. I do not answer for a syllable of truth in this narrative, though it was told me by a Scottish Earl who never gave a vote in his days against any Court.

I have not yet been able to get you 'Gray's Life' [by Johnson]. My bookseller had blundered, and after trusting to him so long, he brought me the preceding volumes: but I am on a new scent, and hope at least to send you a transcript of that single life; though I wish you to see the whole set, nay, those old ones; I dipped into them, and found that the tasteless pedant admires that wretched buffoon Dr. King, who is but a Tom Brown in rhyme;[1] and says that 'The Dispensary,' that *chef d'œuvre*, can scarce make itself read. This is prejudice on both sides, equal to that monkish railer Père Garasse. But Dr. Johnson has indubitably neither taste nor ear, criterion of judgment, but his old woman's prejudices; where they are wanting, he has no rule at all; he prefers Smith's poetic, but insipid and undramatic 'Phædra and Hippolitus' to Racine's 'Phédre,' the finest

[1] See what Walpole himself says of King in one of his Letters.—CUNNINGHAM.

tragedy in my opinion of the French Theatre, for, with Voltaire's leave, I think it infinitely preferable to 'Iphigenie,' and so I own I do 'Britannicus,' 'Mahomet,' 'Alzire,' and some others; but I will allow Johnson to dislike Gray, Garth, Prior—ay, and every genius we have had, when he cries up Blackmore, Thomson, Akenside, and Dr. King; nay, I am glad that the measure of our dulness is full. I would have this era stigmatise itself in every respect, and be a proverb to the nations around, and to future ages. We want but Popery to sanctify every act of blindness. Hume should burn the Works of Locke, and Johnson of Milton, and the Atheist and the Bigot join in the same religious rites, as they both were pensioned by the same piety. Oh! let us not have a ray of sense or throb of sensation left to distinguish us from brutes! let total stupefaction palliate our fall, and let us resemble the Jews, who when they were to elect a God, preferred a calf!

Tuesday.

Upon stricter inquiry, I find that Johnson has not yet published his new 'Lives,' but only given away a few copies.

An account is said to be come from New York, that above two thousand of Washington's army have left him for want of pay, but remain encamped at some distance; have refused to join Clinton, and have sent to the Congress that they will return to Washington if they are paid; if not, that they will not disband. Governor Johnstone's remonstrance is already whittled down to a complaint of one particular ship not being ready.

2nd P.S. Lord Harcourt has got me from Taylor at Bath the method of the Aquatinta, which I have sent to Mr. Stonhewer this morning to transmit to him.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Feb. 28, 1781.

At the last day of the month I should be ungrateful beyond measures if I did not return you my best and sincerest thanks for four delightful letters, which in the course of it amused me even in its bleakest and most tempestuous moments: was Palgrave here (but he left me three days ago), he would join his thanks with mine in the greatest cordiality. He is an excellent creature, has infinite original humour, and, what is better, a good heart.

Mr. Conway's speech suits my political ideas very much, as well as my ecclesiastical; his stricture on a certain bench is highly to my taste, I can assure you; and I admire him the more for having spoken out on the occasion.

The Tale (as you remember) I had seen before, and had told you how much I liked it. I can only say that Palgrave was equally entertained with it.

I am sorry you have had so much trouble about Dr. Johnson's hypercriticisms; 'tis true I should like to see them, but I can wait with much patience. I am rather more

2012. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Feb 26, 1781.

I SHALL not weary you again with saying any more about my nephew. I have done with him! An affair is going to take place that is not unconnected with him, and that gives me some satisfaction. Lord Walpole's eldest son, who at present stands in the light of heir-apparent to both branches of the family, and whom Lord Orford is at least bound to my late uncle to make his heir in succession, is going to marry one of my numerous nieces, Lady Mary Churchill's younger daughter.[1] It is a match of love; she is a very fine girl, but without a shilling. Lord Walpole dislikes the match much, entirely on that last defect: but the son is a most honourable young man; and the father, who is good-natured, has at last given his consent.

Thus, if Lord Orford's madness and the villany of his counsellors (and, I must add, his own want of principle) does not reverse what he promised, *all* the descendants of my father, the author of the greatness of the whole family, will not be deprived of his fortune. My sister Malpas's posterity, to whom it ought first to descend after my brother and me, will be defrauded; but, plundered as Houghton is, the possessors will still look up to the memory of its illustrious founder.

But how weak are these visions about ancestors and descendants!

desirous of picking up a few authentic anecdotes of Mrs. Montague's quarrel with him, and whether it has proceeded to an absolute breach. A less matter than this seems to be, has heretofore given rise to a Mock Epic; but I need say no more, I dare say your imagination can throw it into Cantos.

I ought to thank you for your favourable (I fear too favourable) opinion of my translation of 'Fresnoy;' 'twas a work begun in early youth, and which crept on at very distant and idle intervals. It was near being published twenty years ago, but Mr. Gray and Dr. Hurd thought a translation of such a poem would do me little credit; yet now when I resolved upon it, for the sake of inducing Sir Joshua to comment upon it, I will own I revised it so very carefully, that I do not think that there are ten lines in the whole that are precisely the same they were when my two critics saw it; and as by practice the knack of rhyming is much more my own, so I really do hope in point of versification (considered as a translation) it will pass muster. I cannot, however, think it has much original ease about it. I have heard lately from Mr. Gilpin, who seems much flattered by your good opinion of him; but the post is come, and will not wait even to give me time to sign and seal, and say how much I am yours,

W. MASON.

[1] The marriage of the Honourable Horatio Walpole with Sophia, the daughter of Lady Mary Churchill, took place in July.—WRIGHT.

and how extraordinarily weak am I to harbour them, when I see that a madman, a housemaid, and an attorney can baffle all the views Sir Robert himself had entertained! Could he foresee that his grandson would sell his collection of pictures, or that his granddaughter would marry the King's brother?—Yet, if one excluded visions, and attended only to the philosophy of reflection,—if one always recollected how transitory are all the glories in the imagination, how insipid, how listless would life be!

Are fame or science more real? Would we know what is past, on the truth of what history can we depend? Would we step without the *palpable* world, what do we learn but by guess, or by that most barren of all responses, calculation? Is anything more lean than the knowledge we attain by computing the distance or magnitude of a planet? If we could know more of a world than its size, would not its size be the least part of our contemplation? All I mean is, that it matters not with what visions, provided they are harmless, we amuse ourselves; and that, so far from combating, I often love to entertain them. When one has outlived one's passions and pursuits, one should become inactive or morose if one's second childhood had not its rattles and fables like the first.

I am the more willing to play with local and domestic baby-houses, as the greater scene is still more comfortless; though what is one's country but one's family on a larger scale? What was the glory of immortal Rome, but the family pride of some thousand families? All sublunary objects are but great and little by comparison. You and I have lived long enough to see Houghton and England emerge, the one from a country gentleman's house to a palace, the other from an island to an empire; and to behold both stripped of their acquisitions, and lamentable in their ruins. I will push the comparison between large and petty objects no further, though both have compounded the present colour of my mind. I came hither yesterday, but left nothing new in town. The follies of a great capital are only new in the persons of their favourites.

The fanatic Lord George Gordon was the reigning hero a fortnight ago: the French dancers, Vestris and his son, have dethroned him, and are the reigning bubbles in the air at this moment. On Thursday was sevennight there was an opera for the sufferers by the late dreadful calamities at Barbadoes and Jamaica; the theatre was not half full. Last Thursday was the benefit of Vestris and son; the house could not receive or contain the multitudes that presented themselves. Their oblations amounted to fourteen hundred pounds.

You talk of Dutch prizes: a late storm has paid them in a moment, and thrown into their arms—at least driven and wrecked on their coast, one of our newly arrived Indiamen, worth two hundred thousand pounds. We consoled ourselves with the revolt of a large body of Washington's troops; but, when Sir Henry Clinton invited them to his standard, they impolitely bound his messengers hand and foot, and sent them to the Congress. We are apt to sing *Io Pæan* too soon, and only show how much we want good news, by accepting everything as such; though the second report generally proves sinister.

2013. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

DEAR SIR: *Berkeley Square, March* 2, 1781.

MY Lady Orford ordered herself to be buried at Leghorn, the only place in Tuscany where Protestants have burial;[1] therefore I suppose she did not affect to change. On the contrary, I believe she had no preference for any *sect*, but rather laughed at all. I know nothing new, neither in novelty nor antiquity. I have had no gout this winter, and therefore I call it my *leap-year*. I am sorry it is not yours too. It is an age since I saw Dr. Lort. I hope illness is not the cause. You will be diverted with hearing that I am chosen an honorary member of the new Antiquarian Society at Edinburgh. I accepted for two reasons: first, it is a feather that does not demand my flying thither; and secondly, to show contempt for our own old fools. To me it will be a perfect sinecure, for I have moulted all my pen feathers, and shall have no ambition of nestling into their printed transactions. Adieu, my good Sir. Your much obliged.

2014. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, March 3, 1781.

I BEGAN to be a little out of humour at your silence; your letter came in time, just as I was going to seal up my lips too. An echo that will repeat one word twenty times will stop, unless you feed it anew, though but with a single word. This time, no more than the

[1] Where Smollet is buried.—CUNNINGHAM.

echo, had I any need to lift up my voice. The War is gone to sleep, the Parliament gone to bed, and Vestris himself, if he had any competitor, would go out of fashion. Invention, except of political lies, is not the gift of this age. For want of subject of admiration, Sir Joseph Yorke is called by the newspapers a great man, and for want of taste the Monthly Reviewers call Mr. Hayley a great poet, though he has no more ear or imagination than they have. As if anybody loved reading or did read, Mr. Gibbon has treated them with his vast two volumes. I have almost finished the last, and some parts are more entertaining than the other, and yet it has tired me, and so I think it did himself. There is no spirit in it, nor does any one chapter interest one more than another; which is commonly the case of compilations, especially in such an eloquent age as this. Though these volumes are not polished like the first, you see that he is never thinking of his subject, but intending to make his periods worthy of himself. Then he is often obscure, for from the prodigious quantity of matter he frequently is content with alluding to his original; and who for mercy would recur to Sozomen, Jornandez, and Procopius? Then having both the Eastern and Western Empires on his hands at once, and nobody but *Imbecilles* and their Eunuchs at the head, one is confused with two subjects, that are quite alike, though quite distinct; and in the midst of this distraction enters a deluge of Alans, Huns, Goths, Ostrogoths, and Visigoths, who with the same features and characters are to be described in different terms, without any essential variety, and he is to bring you acquainted with them when you wish them all at the bottom of the Red Sea. He has made me a present of these volumes, and I am sure I shall have fully paid for them when I have finished them: one paragraph I must select, which I believe the author did not intend should be so applicable to the present moment. "The Armorican provinces of Gaul and the greatest part of Spain were thrown into a state of disorderly independence by the confederations of the Bagaudæ; and the Imperial ministers pursued with proscriptive laws and ineffectual arms the rebels whom they had made." End of Chap. xxxv. This is also a sample of the style which is translating bad Latin into English, that may be turned into Classic Latin. I was charmed, as I owned, with the enamel of the first volume, but I am tired by this rhetoric diction, and wish again for Bishop Burnet's *And so.*

They who write of their own times love or hate the actors, and draw you to their party; but with the fear of the *laws* of

history before his eyes, a compiler affects you no more than a Chancery suit about the entail of an estate with whose owners you was not acquainted. Poor Lord Lyttelton was of all that tribe the most circumspect, and consequently the most insipid. His 'Henry II.' raises no more passions than Burn's 'Justice of Peace.' Apropos, "*poor Lyttelton*" were the words of offence. Mrs. Vesey sounded the trumpet. It has not, I believe, produced any altercation, but at a blue-stocking meeting held by Lady Lucan, Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Johnson kept at different ends of the chamber, and set up altar against altar there. There she told me as a mark of her high displeasure, that she would never ask him to dinner again. I took her side, and fomented the quarrel, and wished I could have made Dagon and Ashtaroth scold in Coptic.

I am happy that you like Mr. Conway's speech, and the Concio ad Clerum. The Duke of Grafton, with whom I dined the other day with Mr. Conway and Stonhewer,[1] told us that the Flamen most offended is Bishop Keene. I do believe he is one of the most sore, for he is one of the most putrid; but he must be ten times more angry at his own son, who spoke on Monday *for* Burke's Bill. Lord Chatham's second son, they say, was far more like *his* father. Sheridan demolished Courtenay, who, old George Cavendish said well, is Deputy Buffoon to Lord North.

I am sorry you have lost Palgrave, and wish you could tempt him to meet you at Strawberry Hill.

Sir Joshua, I doubt, will not have time soon to expedite your 'Fresnoy;' it must be much altered, or I should marvel at Gray; for Bishop Hurd[2] you know I never admired him, even before he was mitred. All his writings are tame, without a grain of originality. I shall always maintain that you have made a masterly poem from a very moderate one, without adding to the author's sense. If that is not the perfection of translation, I do not know what is. I am very sensible that you could have added more gold, but who ever gilt so well? This I take to be the precise definition of a good translation, which improves base metal without adding ore. Adieu.

[1] At the Duke of Grafton's, in Piccadilly, there is a portrait of Stonhewer by Sir Joshua Reynolds.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] See to Zouch, 4th Feb. 1760, and Letter to Hertford; also 'Walpoliana,' 137.—CUNNINGHAM.

2015. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

March 5, 1781.

I DO not in the least guess or imagine what you mean by Lord Hardwicke's publication of a *Walpoliana*.[1] Naturally it should mean a collection of sayings or anecdotes of my father, according to the French *Anas*, which began, I think, with those of Menage. Or, is it a collection of letters and state-papers during his administration? I own I am curious to know at least what this piece contains. I had not heard a word of it; and, were it not for the name, I should have very little inquisitiveness about it: for nothing upon earth ever was duller than the three heavy tomes his Lordship printed of 'Sir Dudley Carleton's Negotiations,' and of what he called State-papers. Pray send me an answer as soon as you can; at least of as much as you have heard about this thing.

2016. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 9, 1781.

I HAVE at last got for you Johnson's criticism on Gray. There is not the introductory Life, but this is all I have; and very oddly, Mr. Bentley sent it to me in manuscript, from indignation, as he is a true admirer of Gray; and he tells me that he received it from a correspondent at Oxford, who adds, that it is to appear in two months *to the making all Oxford too happy*. I send you this genuine expression, and I trust you will not forget the feature. You will find ample matter for satire and ridicule, besides the hints I have given you already from his other Lives. I depend on your asserting your indisputable right to succession, by vindicating your lawful predecessors.

To my great joy, I have done with the Goths and Huns and Visigoths [in Gibbon's History]. You will not read of them, but pray when you have an opportunity, turn to the very last page of the last volume, and to the very conclusion—it will be worth your while. I am now embarked in another almost as tedious a navigation, Mr.

[1] 'Walpoliana; or a few Anecdotes of Sir Robert Walpole;'—an agreeable little collection of anecdotes relative to Sir Robert Walpole, made by Philip, second Earl of Hardwicke: printed in quarto, but never published.—WRIGHT.

Warton's third volume. This is the third immense History of the life of Poetry, and still Poetry is not yet born, for Spenser will not appear till the fourth tome. I perceive it is the certain fate of an antiquary to become an old fool. Mr. Warton thinks Prior spoiled his original in his imitation of 'Henry and Emma.' Mercy on us! what shall we come to in these halcyon days! *O for "some gentle James,"*[1] &c.

Last week the Stocks pricked up their ass's ears six inches higher. Austria and Russia were to make peace for us. France and Spain had accepted the Imperial mediations, and the *great* Sir Joseph drew on his boots and was galloping over sea to Vienna. Sir Joseph's boots are still on, but France, they say, has said nothing, and Spain has said no, and we, I believe, protest against the independence of America, which we can very well afford, for we have funded only twenty-one millions to borrow twelve. For my part, I wish for peace, and I do not care how bad an one: our glory is gone, our constitution gone, our sense gone, but I would save the lives that are left; and then Mr. Gibbon and the University of Oxford may hunt for and find what topics of panegyric they please. Adieu! I must send away my packet to Mr. S[tonhewer] and desire him to find a conveyance for it.[2]

[1] 'Dunciad,' bk. iv. l. 176.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *Aston, March* 29, 1781.

My laziness makes me put off writing to everybody till it becomes necessary to make an apology, and laziness hates apologising so much that then she becomes infinitely more strong in her powers of procrastination. I will, however, as the Psalmist says, "break her bonds asunder, and cast away her cords from me." I will thank you again and again for your two letters, without saying more than I have said for not having answered them. I will thank you, nay, my laziness shall thank you too, for saving us the trouble of reading Mr. Gibbon, and for doing your best to save us from reading T. Warton. But in this latter author's antiquarian mud we are already above knee deep, and we must on as fast as we are able. There was somebody, I think it was D'Alembert, that out of two thick quartos of German, made a hundred duodecimo pages about Queen Christina, which were the prettiest and pleasantest reading in the world. I trust that posterity (if posterity deserves it) will be blest with some future anecdotist like one I could name (who has proved, contrary to his own *ipse dixit*, "that a man may be an antiquarian without becoming an old fool") that will select out of these three quartos, Anecdotes of English Poetry in two or three small octavos, about the size, for instance, of the 'Royal and Noble Authors;' and should this be the case, our Oxonian will not have written in vain. Nevertheless, let us do him justice; where he writes on a good subject, few write better, and what he has said of Lord Surrey is quite what it should be; the mischief is, that he thinks all subjects equally good, and those best that are oldest. And now let me thank you for your transcript of Johnson, which is certainly the meanest business that ever disgraced Literature. He shall certainly have his reward when my 'English Garden' (the fourth book of which is

2017. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

March 13, 1781.

I HAVE just received your three lines of Feb. 28 by your courier, and hurry to reply, lest he should call for my answer before it is finished. I have indeed nothing to tell you that might not go through all the inquisitions and post-offices in Europe; for I can only send you my own vague conjectures or opinions. The guns are going off for the conquest of Eustatia by Rodney, which is just arrived. It may be a good circumstance towards disposing the Dutch to peace; and perhaps to balance what your despatch brings, which is probably an attempt or design on Minorca. We imagine, too, that the grand fleet sailed yesterday *at last*, which is to relieve Gibraltar, and annihilate the combined squadrons.

Last week the Stocks rose six per cent. in two days. It was given out that the Emperor and Empress had offered their mediation, and that all parties had accepted it, and that Sir Joseph Yorke was to depart on wings of winds to Vienna to conclude the peace. Much of this cargo of propitious news is fallen off, as well as the Stocks. Sir Joseph is not gone; and at most it is said that their Imperial Majesties have made a defensive alliance, and that Russia

now in the York press) is out of my hands. I do not think I could do it any way better than by what I more than half did, three years ago, in a certain Monologue, of which you saw the greatest part, but then it would certainly tell tales. I have a great mind to weave it into a Mock Epic, could I get the least hint of a squabble between Queen Ashtaroth [Mrs. Montague] and Dagon [Dr. Johnson]. If that matter goes further, pray give me early intelligence; a grave answer would do him too much honour, and to whip him on the back of his patrons, would suit my fancy best. However, be assured I mean to turn myself entirely to that topic soon, in some way or other.

You have set my friend Mr. Gilpin, I fear, an impracticable task, and yourself, with Lord Harcourt, one much more so, by advising him to print his Tours,—subscribers will never be found sufficient to pay the expense. You should have contrived to have done it by Lord North's assistance, out of the surplus of the new loan. He has written to me on the subject, and I have advised him to risk only some detached part by way of experiment.

I find our Deputies are obliged to undeputise themselves before they can petition Parliament. I have little hopes that a petition of forty country gentlemen will be much attended to by the present Parliament. I think they will put them under custody of the Serjeant-at-arms for their presumption, if not into Newgate. No matter, all is over, and I should not have broached this topic, had it not been merely to fill my paper. Did you set the rose-leaves of your *treillage* at Strawberry on fire by your illuminations for Santa Eustacia?

Yours most truly,

W. MASON.

had civilly told the Dutch that she could do no more for them, but advised them to make peace. Now, would you know my own belief? It is, that, whatever advances are made to us, we shall profit of none, but persist in the American war; at least in such a submission as may leave us power to violate any treaty and begin again. Our foolhardiness is past all credibility; the nation is besotted, and not a great view is left *above* or below. If I filled my paper, I should but dilate on those two points. For my part, I do assure you, I cast all politics out of my thoughts. I see no glimmering of hope that we should be a great nation again; nor do we deserve to be. I wish for peace at any rate; and I cease to love my country, because I am disinterested, just as they do who sell it, because they are the reverse. I cannot love what deserves no esteem.

Private news we have none, but the silly topics of dancers and crowds. Nothing at all passes in the House of Lords, and not much in the other, but jobs. Their Highnesses of Cumberland have turned short from the King, and court the Prince of Wales,[1] and the Opposition, and the ton, and the mob. *My friends*[2] sit still, and sensibly let the hurricane lower which way it will. *It* will soon, I suppose, produce confusion and new quarrels; but you know me too well to imagine that I will embark, even in speculation, on chapters to come. When I doubt almost all I hear in the present moment, I shall not roam into guesses on future events, which I probably shall not know whether they happen or not. Adieu! I must seal my letter to have it ready. It is not very informing, but at least it tells you that everything is in suspense.

2018. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, March 29, 1781.

You are so good-natured that I am sure you will be glad to be told that the report of Mr. Pennant being disordered is not true. He is come to town—has been with me, and at least is as composed as ever I saw him. He is going to publish another part of his 'Welsh Tour,' which he can well afford; though I believe he does not lose by his works. An aunt is dead, exceedingly rich, who had

[1] His Royal Highness had, on the first of January, been declared of age, and appeared at court in his new character.—Wright.

[2] The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.—Walpole.

given some thousands to him and his daughter, but suddenly changed her mind and left all to his sister, who has most nobly given him all that had been destined in the cancelled Will. Dr. Nash has just published the first volume of his 'Worcestershire.' It is a folio of prodigious corpulence, and yet dry enough; but then it is finely dressed, and has many heads and views. Dr. Lort was with me yesterday, and I never saw him better, nor has he been much out of order. I hope your gout has left you; but here are winds bitter enough to give one anything. Yours ever.

2019. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 30, 1781.

I WROTE a letter to you for your messenger the moment he arrived, but he was detained here so long that it must have reached you antiquated. He found us exulting for the capture of St. Eustatia: the scene is a little changed since, both in the West and East. America is once more not quite ready to be conquered, though every now and then we fancy it is. Tarleton is defeated, Lord Cornwallis is checked, and Arnold not sure of having betrayed his friends to much purpose. If we are less certain of recovering what we have thrown away, we are in full as much danger of losing what we acquired, not more creditably, at the other end of the world. Hyder Ally, an Indian potentate, thinking he has as much right to the diamonds of his own country as the Rumbolds and Sykes's, who were originally waiters in a tavern, has given us a blow, and *has not done.*

Europe has a mass of debts to pay to the other quarters of the globe; which, on the merit of having improved navigation and invented gunpowder, we have thought we had a right to desolate and plunder; and we have been such savages as to punish each other for our crimes. The Romans havocked the world for glory; the Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch, and English, for gold; but each nation thirsted to engross the whole mass, and became scourges to each other. Attila and Hyder Ally are at least as innocent as Julius Cæsar and Lord Clive.

Our fleet is gone to rescue Gibraltar. The French fleet has not yet moved; but the next month will probably be an important one. The negotiations for peace seem to have stopped in their birth, and probably will depend on the events of that month. The Dutch

reply to our Manifesto will not raise our credit, as it gives us the lie pretty flatly on our assertion of their having attempted to make us no satisfaction on our complaints of the conduct of Amsterdam. Methinks it were better to be a little accurate, as there are more readers in Europe than our country gentlemen.

I am sorry when I cannot admire all our proceedings; but politics will not always stand the test of cool survey. Indeed, it is not fair to decide on parts, especially in the heat of events. The wisdom of measures must depend on the prudence, goodness, and object of the system, together with a just calculation of the probability of events, and a comparison of the value of the advantage of success with the danger and detriment of miscarriage. I am far from allowing that even wise measures, with all the profit of success, are good; for then fortunate conquerors would be excusable, which I shall never think: but I doubt we are not likely to have that dazzling consolation; nor have I knowledge or penetration enough to discover the beauty of the system that threw us into the American war, and still prefers war with France, Spain, and Holland, to the confession of our mistake. Adieu! my dear Sir.

P.S. I am impatient for the 'History of the Medici.'

2020. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 30, 1781.

You flatten our correspondence so much by never answering my letters, that I have not spirit to keep it up: it would look as if I delighted in writing. You have not even told me that you received the MS. of 'Gray's Life [by Johnson];' surely that did not leave you totally without matter for a line! The country I allow does not furnish topics like the capital, and yet unless I wrote of Vestris and the follies of fashion, what else makes sensation here? The departure of the fleet that leaves us as exposed as we were before the conquest to Danes and Saxons, makes none: a much more distant revolution than might happen here does make impression, or I should still not write. Adieu, the golden sands of the Ganges (all the waters of which would not wash away our corruptions)! adieu the diamonds of Bengal! Rumbold is the last waiter at 'White's' whose babe will be rocked in a cradle of gems; and Sykes the last footman who will be created a baronet for being worth some lacs of rupees!

The Nabob of Arcot will have no more Members of Parliament for retainers, Lord Sandwich will carry no more gold muslins cross the Park, and should Lord North want another loan of twelve millions to enrich Mr. Drummond and his clerks and livery servants, he must not reckon on the Indian Company. Hyder Ali has dispersed all our visions of endless wealth; Lord Clive usurped, Lord Pigot died; and Paul Benfield has been a rascal, and has returned under the sanction of Parliament and of his Grace of York to be one again in vain! yes, India and America are alike escaping out of the talons of the Scotch. Cargoes of bad news arrived on Tuesday from East and West. Tarleton is beaten, and the twenty thousand pounds that purchased Arnold's treachery are likely to have been bestowed to no purpose. Another disgrace is that the Dutch manifesto convicts us of a notorious and gross lie, that of affirming that they refused an answer to our complaint of Van Berchel; that lie we endeavoured to support by hinting to the Amsterdammers in all the Court newspapers, that they would do *well* to tear him and the magistrates piecemeal.

Having passed the bounds of all shame, we have returned the forbearance of the French at the Grenades to our proprietors, by the contrary practice at St. Eustatia; Lord George Germaine, however, out of modesty or pride has refused to avow this scandalous proceeding under his hand, in his answer to our merchants, who have remonstrated against it.

Your cloth, who will not be behindhand in any effrontery, take occasion to distinguish their zeal. Bishop *Proteus* of Chester affirms the Roman Catholics decrease—an excellent reason for flinging indulgences at their heads, to invite them back. Dr. Bagot has published the silliest, emptiest, of all pretty pamphlets against a Dr. Bell, who has written on the Sacrament, and the whole purpose of the former is to have an opportunity of calling Bishop Hoadley, Socinian. I am glad the monk Bagot aud the atheist Hume meet cordially in abuse on the excellent Bishop. Tucker has published his attack on Locke. In short, we shall not stop till all virtue and all sense, as well as all Europe, are our enemies; I am sick of writing on such themes, and since you do not answer me, this letter is long enough.

2021. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night, April 1, 1781.

Your letter and mine crossed each other. As you have made *amende honorable* for your indolence, it is but equitable on my side to absolve you. Nay, you merit more by the promise you make me, and like a fond mother that taps a favourite, I am ready to shower sugar-plums on you to cure the slap that did not hurt you. Seriously, the Mock Heroic would be the highest completion of my wishes; it is what I have always recommended to you, not only as best suited to your genius, but as uniting those two distant talents, both which you eminently possess,—harmonious poetry and wit. Pray let Dr. Johnson feel that a 'Dispensary' can make itself be read, and I will answer that it will continue to be so. The quarrel with Ashtaroth [Mrs. Montague], I believe, has gone no farther, and will not furnish above an episode; but I have sent you materials enough, I am sure, of late, to stock you with congenial topics, unless a system to recall the monkish ages can fail being a magazine. In the mean time your 'Garden' shall be welcome, though, like his Majesty's herb-woman, I hope it will only strew flowers before the grand procession.

If you will not read the Constantinopolitan Historian [Gibbon], you will at least not disdain to turn to a particular passage or two: look at page 46 of vol. ii. on the reduction of the legions, beginning at the words, "The *same timid policy*." Lord John says, he is persuaded that Gibbon had thrown in that and such sentences and sentiments when he was paying court to Charles Fox, and forgot to correct them after his change.

You are very good in condescending to make an apology for mentioning your Deputies. It would become me rather to ask your pardon for differing with you on any part of that business. My discordance was founded on the unhappy knowledge I have of my countrymen, who, I was sure, as it proved, would be glad to seize any opportunity of division to withdraw from their engagements. Mr. W.[yvill]'s success had inspired him with too much confidence. Whoever will govern must submit to be governed—I mean that one must yield in many points to carry the principal. But I will say no more on that head, since the moment has been lost; yet I do not envy those who are delivered from domestic alarms. The

complaisance of the Parliament does but insure ruin; every vote that is carried plunges us deeper, and had the American or Spanish or Dutch war been resisted, it had been happy for England. Falsehood demanded every vote, and gold procured every one. The mines will fail, and then truth will emerge, though much too late. As to Mr. Gilpin, Lord Harcourt's plan and mine was that he should execute the prints himself, which we thought would be easy, if he could learn the Aquatinta, which seems an easy and expeditious method, for one that can draw so well. As to encouragement, we do not flatter ourselves that we have interest, and I am sure there is no advising anybody to risk expense at present; extravagance itself begins to calculate.

As this is only a Postscript to my last, it is long enough. I shall carry it to town to-morrow, and add anything that I hear before Tuesday evening. Last night's Gazette has endeavoured to wipe out Tarleton's defeat by some meagre advantages since, and the bells here have rung for them, for all chimes are retained in the pay of the Government, and perhaps the insurrection at Amsterdam went into the tune, though I know that even the great Sir Joseph Yorke, as the newspapers call him, did not believe it on Friday night, and there is no mail come since.

Tuesday evening.

I may seal my letter, for I have nothing to add.

2022. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

April 3, 1781.

I AM very sorry, dear Sir, that, in my last letter but one, I took no notice of what you said about Lord Hardwicke;[1] the truth was, I am perfectly indifferent about what he prints or publishes. There is generally a little indirect malice, but so much more dullness, that the latter soon suffocates the former. This is telling you that I could not be offended at anything you said of him, nor am I likely to suspect a sincere friend of disobliging me. You have proved the direct contrary these forty years. I have not time to say more, but am ever most truly yours.

[1] "I wrote last week, and I repeat it,—I don't want to know your opinion or sentiments about the 'Walpoliana,' or 'Anecdotes about your Father,' which, if not shown to you before publication, I must think it one of the greatest pieces of ill-manners I ever heard of." *Cole to Walpole*, 7 *March*, 1781. (*MS.*)—CUNNINGHAM.

2023. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 14, 1781.

As all our politics are at sea, I have none to send you, for the only land-topic of that class I am in the dark about, I mean the Chancellor's mumbling of Lord Sandwich and Lord Bathurst; for though tithes were the occasion, they certainly were not the cause: some quarrel there is supposed to be in the Cabinet, I know not what nor care.

Your Primate [Markham] on Sunday was se'nnight, preached a sermon at the Royal Chapel, that sounded as sour, and probably had much the same foundation as the Chancellor's discontent. The shaft seemed to be aimed at his quondam pupil, as it reproved unbounded indulgence of the passions, and satirised the ambition of being an expert charioteer; then daring higher, his Grace condemned the waste of the lives of subjects from the obstinate pursuit of empty titles of sovereignty. *Diable, ou en sommes nous?*

Dean Milles is going to revive 'Rowley,' yet so as by laudanum. Mr. Bryant, too, is a convert: I asked him t'other night at Lord Dacre's if he could seriously believe that Rowley was the author of what Chatterton ascribed to him. He said, "Oh, no, he was persuaded those poems were much *older* than Rowley." I smiled, and begged he would not take it ill, if I told him what happened to me a few years ago: Governor Pownall had tired me to death with reading a dissertation on the ruins of a building in Ireland, which he maintained were the remains of a temple built by the Danes on the foundation of a much older edifice raised by some nation who lived so long ago that nobody knows who they were,—I did not dare to add, that I suppose they were the Ammonians.

Sir Joshua Reynolds has lent me Dr. Johnson's 'Life of Pope,' which Sir Joshua holds to be a *chef-d'œuvre*. It is a most trumpery performance, and stuffed with all his crabbed phrases and vulgarisms, and much trash as anecdotes; you shall judge yourself. He says, that all he can discover of Pope's correspondent, Mr. Cromwell, is that he used to hunt in a tie-wig. The 'Elegy on the Unfortunate Lady,' he says, "signifies the amorous fury of a raving girl;" and yet he admires the subject of Eloisa's Epistle to Abelard. The machinery in 'The Rape of Lock,' he calls "combinations of skilful genius with happy casuality," in English I guess a "lucky thought:'

publishing proposals is turned into "emitting" them. But the 66th page is still more curious: it contains a philosophic solution of Pope's not transcribing the whole 'Iliad' as soon as he thought he should, and it concludes with this piece of bombast nonsense, "he that runs against time has an antagonist not subject to casualties." Pope's house here he calls "the house to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebration," and that "his vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage;" and that, "of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was good sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety." Was poor good sense ever so unmercifully overlaid by a babbling old woman? How was it possible to marshal words so ridiculously? He seems to have read the ancients with no view but of pilfering polysyllables, utterly insensible to the graces of their simplicity, and these are called standards of biography! I forgot, he calls Lord Hervey's challenging Pulteney, "summoning him to a duel." Hurlothrumbo talked plain English in comparison of this wight on stilts, but I doubt I have wearied you,—send me something to put my mouth in taste.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, April 21, 1781.

As I have been reading Mr. Gibbon I am rather sceptical, and as I have been reading also Dr. Tucker, I am somewhat of a blackguard: I therefore distrust your anecdote about my diocesan [Markham]. I will not, however, call you a rank fibber, as the last-mentioned writer calls people rank republicans; but still I must say I distrust your veracity on this point, but not from an internal but external cause; because I cannot conceive how he could preach on the Sunday you mention, as I am enough versed in the etiquette of Lent preachments to know his turn did not come till either Good Friday or Easter Sunday. Pray clear up this matter if possible, for I would fain have this anecdote uncontrovertibly true, and should be glad too of more particulars. This said diocesan has issued out his mandate concerning a visitation in June, which will tie me down to my parish till it be over.

As I have in my time kept worse company than you ever did, and am more used to vulgarity, I have been able to read great part of the Dean of Gloucester's long-expected attack on Locke, but I am sure you will not be able to read a single page of it,—you could as soon drink gin with a Wapping landlady. I wish, however, I could prevail on you to read the last paragraph which sums up his whole doctrine, and which is neither more nor less than that of his worthy brother in the old song of the Vicar of Bray,—

That this is law I will maintain
Unto my dying day, Sir,
That whatsoever King shall reign
I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir.

As this is the most commodious doctrine which ever was invented for churchmen, no wonder that the reverend bench revised it so cordially, and spoke so handsomely of it when it was handed to their inspection in an unpublished state.

2024. TO JOHN HENDERSON, ESQ.[1]

Berkeley Square, April 16, 1781.

EVER since I had the pleasure of seeing you here, I have been uneasy at what you told me, of having seen an extract of my Tragedy[2] in a work going to be published. Though I was so imprudent as to print and give away some copies of it; and, consequently, exposed myself to the risk of what is happening, yet I heartily wish I could prevent that publication, as it will occasion discourse about the play, which is disgusting from the subject, and absurd from being totally unfit for the stage—a reason which, could I have suceeeded better, ought still to have restrained me from undertaking it.

May I take the liberty of asking you, if you think it could be stopped? I should be willing to pay for my folly: do not answer me by a compliment, nor tell me, as civility may perhaps dictate, that it would be pity to deprive the public of such a *jewel*. Pray do not think that I seek for, or should like, such an hyperbole. I use

I thank you for your last farrago of Dæmogorgon Jargon.[1] How can poor Sir Joshua be such an oaf to admire such a writer, when his own style is so free from those blemishes? I shrewdly suspect he will show Johnson my translation, and that as he will certainly abuse it, Sir Joshua will lay aside the thought of annotations. Be this as it may, I will give him fair time for the purpose, as I am in no haste about publishing it.

Pray does Raspe's book proceed towards a publication? I wish much to see it. You find I am reduced to asking of questions, and how should it be otherwise, when I have nothing for you of information? Was I to tell you that I drink Hyder Ally's health every day in a glass of port, perhaps it might prompt you to pledge me in your glass of orange juice; pray do so. I am sorry, however, that the news of his victories come so rapidly. I wish we might hear no more of him till Lord North has unchartered the East India Company, and then the more the merrier. I remember five years ago, that mad woman who works in wax told me, when I went to her raree show, "that if there was a God and a providence, which she firmly believed there was, and hoped (as I seem'd to be a parson) that I believed the same, that the Americans would never be conquered;" so I am inclined to rest my friend Hyder Ally's success on the same foundation. I shall hope, having spun out this scrawl to a competent length, you will continue your wonted kindness to me, and give me something for my nothing. In this hope I remain

Yours very truly,
W. MASON.

[1] Now first published. Walpole's correspondent is the celebrated actor.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] 'The Mysterious Mother.'—CUNNINGHAM.

[1] Extracts from Johnson's Life of Pope.—CUNNINGHAM.

the word *jewel* most ironically, and do not imagine that a pebble with a great flaw through the whole can have much lustre. There is no affectation in this request. I have betrayed but too much vanity in printing what I knew had such capital faults; but I am too old now not to fear disgusting the public more than I can flatter myself with its approbation. Yet the impression of only a small number of copies at first, will prove that, when several years younger, I was conscious of the imperfections of my tragedy, and gave them only to those who I knew were partial to me. There are many defects in the execution as well as in the subject; but when the materials are ill-chosen, what would it avail to retouch the fashion? Nor though I have sometimes written verses, did I ever think that I was born a poet.

In short, Sir, I most sincerely wish to have the publication of any part of the play prevented, and you will oblige me exceedingly if you can assist me. Perhaps it is asking too great a favour, when I beg you to take that trouble; if it is, only let me know the editor,[1] and I will undertake the task myself.

I am, Sir, with great regard,
Your obedient humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2025. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 25, 1781.

THOUGH the list of Lent Preachers may contradict me ever so flatly, the fact was not a jot less true. I heard it three hours after the delivery of the sermon, from one that was present and several times since. Nay, it gave so much offence to the *charioteer* (who was also, nobody knows why, called a *gladiator*) that he swore, "D——n the scoundrel, I will never forgive him!" The insult surprised even in London, hardened as we are to inconsistency. I know no more about it; but that the sermon was understood as a satire, there is no doubt, nor that it was so taken by the object of it. That the *intention* may be denied is very likely, for what will not a Bishop say or unsay? For instance, my Lord of Oxford [Butler[2]] dining lately at Lambeth, declaimed against Dr. Bell for supporting Hoadley's

[1] Of the Biographia Dramatica. 2 vols. 8vo., 1781.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] John Butler, Bishop of Oxford, 1777-88, and Bishop of Hereford from 1788 till his death in 1802.—CUNNINGHAM.

doctrine on the Sacrament. Another divine there present told me, that he actually has in print an anonymous pamphlet written formerly by *Butler himself* against Warburton for censuring Hoadley on that occasion, but is there a yard of lawn in England more dirty than Butler's? If I meet with Tucker's book, I will, to oblige you, read the last sentence, but I certainly will not buy it, nor will pay for following their clergy through every kennel. In truth I have a mind to save my money and my eyes, and read no more.

We are in a state of reprobation, and have no more sense left than principles. It is but just now that I have waded through three thousand lines of a poem called 'Burlesque,' which diverted me as much as a dose of diacodium would do; in short, I will swear, as good Royalists did in the civil war, to let my beard grow till you write. I had rather play at push-pin than read, only to unlearn all my ideas, and be told that King William and Marlborough were no heroes, Russell and Sydney no patriots, Locke and Hoadley no reasoners, Milton, Prior, Garth, and Gray no poets; which leaves vacancies for Lord Mansfield and Lord George Germaine to slip into the seats of courage, Wedderburn and Hillsborough into those of patriotism, D. Hume and Johnson into those of solid argument, and all the bellmen of Oxford into those of poetry. As to Lord Chatham, the victories, conquests, extension of our empire within these last five years, will annihilate his fame of course, and he may be replaced by Starvation Dundas,[1] whose pious policy suggested that the devil of *rebellion could be expelled only by fasting*, though that never drove him out of Scotland. Unfortunately, Dr. Franklin was a truer politician, when he said he would furnish Mr. Gibbon with materials for writing the 'History of the Decline of the British Empire,' but I doubt he will not pen the character of Hyder Alli with so much complacency as that of Attila.

I have no news for you, as you may perceive by my rehashing these old grievances, but when chaos is come again, what would signify a courier from Paradise? It adds to my vexation that you cannot or will not come. Well, I will forget all the world, and though I will learn no creed or jargon of the day, I will find out some pastime that shall not have a grain of sense in it, and yet

[1] *Starvation* was an epithet applied to Mr. Dundas, the word being, for the first time, introduced into our language by him, in a speech, in 1775, in an American debate, and thenceforward became a nickname; see p. 310: "I shall not wait for the advent of *starvation* from Edinburgh, to settle my judgment."—Mitford.

have much more meaning than anything in fashion, which will be no difficult task.

Raspe's book is finished, and will be published next week. I do not ask for a letter, but a line to direct me how to send it to you.

A few words more, and I have done for the present. I shall be chagrined to the last degree if I do not see you here this summer, as you promised. I have many things to say to you that I cannot write, and I do not like to delay. I am grown lamentably old; and though my health is much better than last year, the mental part is far from being in the same order. I perceive decays in it every day, and I dread their increasing till I do not perceive them. This makes me withdraw a good deal from the world, and without any struggle; but I could wish to see more of the few friends I have left, and consequently the one I most admire. It is a sad invitation to tell you that I totter, but I am petitioning your heart, and not your fancy, and know I apply to the right office. Oh! but there is or may be an obstacle that I do fear: Lord Harcourt is to go to Harrowgate, and that journey may detain you in the north! Well! pleasures are not the portion of age! I love you both too well to wish to separate you; and I will be content with your mutual satisfaction if it clashes with mine.

Thursday, 26th.

I have found a parcel of Raspe's books on my table; you shall have one the moment you draw for it.

There is nothing new, for I do not reckon the rhodomontades of the 'Gazette' on Rodney and Arbuthnot novelties: they have not even raised the Stocks a fraction.

2026. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, April 27, 1781.

Perhaps you may think I have fallen into a lethargy; but it is only the war that is so. At least, though the ocean is covered with navies, they do nothing but walk about in their sleep,—unless you know to the contrary; for you are nearer to the scene of action, if there is any, than we are. The Spanish fleet is said to be retired to Cadiz, and to have civilly left the path to Gibraltar open, which would be very civil. In short, I can tell you nothing but hearsay, or what people say without having heard. It is a month since I

wrote to you, and yet nothing has happened but an Extraordinary Gazette or two, which brags, like a bridegroom at threescore, of having forced two little fortresses that begged to be ravished, and of Arbuthnot having balked an inferior squadron. Methinks we Western Powers should make peace, and not expose ourselves to the Vandals of the North, who overrun kingdoms in fewer weeks than it costs us years to take an island no bigger than half-a-crown.

The Parliament has quite left off business, though it has not shut up shop. In short, I hope your nephew writes to you, for I can find nothing to say; and where he does, is past my comprehension. If I trusted to my imagination, I should not wonder at its being worn out; but, as I have always piqued myself upon telling nothing but facts that at least I believe true, my eyes and ears are not gone; and, if there was an event no bigger than a grain of millet, I could easily know it; for those drag-nets, our newspapers, let nothing escape them, from whales to the most insignificant fry. But four days ago, 'The Public Advertiser' informed the town that I have a field that wants draining at Strawberry Hill, which no doubt is very important intelligence! Antiquaries used to be ridiculous for recovering trifles from the havoc of time: now we have daily writers that sift the kennels, and save every straw that would be swallowed in the common sewer. Then think what thousands of loiterers we must have, who can buy and read such rubbish, in the midst of a civil war, and wars with the great nations! How contemptible we are! and, to our shame, these journals of our trifling are circulated all over Europe! Don't you blush when you read them? And do you wonder that I have nothing to say? I have always reckoned my own letters very trifling and superficial; but two misses that correspond would be ashamed of communicating such foolish paragraphs as compose the daily lectures of the metropolis: and yet it is well when they are only foolish—more commonly they are brutal or scandalous.

Well! I have been writing about nothing, and may as well finish. You see my silence is owing to no want of good will.

2027. [1]TO HENRY WILLIAM BUNBURY,[2] ESQ.

Berkeley Square, April 28, 1781.

I AM just come, Sir, from the Royal Academy, where I had been immediately struck, as I always am by your works, by a most capital drawing of Richmond Hill; but what was my surprise and pleasure—for I fear the latter preceded my modesty—when I found your note, and read that so very fine a performance was destined for me! This is a true picture of my emotions, Sir, but I hope you will believe that I am not less sincere when I assure you that the first moment's reflection told me how infinitely, Sir, you think of overpaying me for the poor though just tribute of my praise in a trifling work,[3] whose chief merit is its having avoided flattery. Your genius, Sir, cannot want *that*, and, still less, my attestation; but when you condescend to reward *this*, I doubt I shall be a little vain, for when I shall have such a certificate to produce, how will it be possible to remain quite humble? I must beg you, Sir, to accept my warmest and most grateful thanks, which are doubled by your ingenious delicacy in delivering me, in this very agreeable manner, from the pain I felt in fearing that I had taken too much liberty with you.

I am, &c.,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2028. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, May 4, 1781.

I SHALL not only be ready to show Strawberry Hill, at any time he chooses, to Dr. Farmer, as your friend, but to be honoured with his acquaintance, though I am very shy now of contracting new. I have great respect for his character and abilities and judicious taste, and am very clear that he has elucidated Shakspeare[4] in a more reasonable and satisfactory manner than any of his affected commen-

[1] Now first collected. From the 'Hanmer Correspondence,' 8vo, 1838, p. 397.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Second son of the Rev. Sir William Bunbury, Bart., of Mildenhall, Suffolk. He died at Keswick, in 1811, aged 61.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] 'Anecdotes of Painting;' in the Advertisement to which, dated 1st Oct., 1780, he had called Mr. Bunbury "the second Hogarth."—CUNNINGHAM.

[4] In his well-known 'Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare.'—WRIGHT.

tators, who only complimented him with learning that he had not, in order to display their own.

Pray give me timely notice whenever I am likely to see Dr. Farmer, that I may not be out of the way when I can have an opportunity of showing attention to a friend of yours, and pay a small part of your gratitude to him. There shall be a bed at his service; for you know Strawberry cannot be seen in a moment, nor are Englishmen so *liable* as to get acquainted in the time they are walking through a house.

But now, my good Sir, how could you suffer your prejudiced partiality to me to run away with you so extravagantly, as to call me one of the greatest characters of the age? You are too honest to flatter, too much a hermit to be interested, and I am too powerless and insignificant to be an object of court, were you capable of paying it from mercenary views. I know then that it could proceed from nothing but the warmth of your heart; but if you are blind towards me, I am not so to myself. I know not how others feel on such occasions, but if any one happens to praise me, all my faults rush into my face, and make me turn my eyes inward and outward with horror. What am I but a poor old skeleton tottering towards the grave, and conscious of ten thousand weaknesses, follies, and worse! And for talents, what are mine, but trifling and superficial; and, compared with those of men of real genius, most diminutive! Mine a great character! Mercy on me! I am a composition of Anthony Wood and Madame Danois,[1] and I know not what trumpery writers. This is the least I can say to refute your panegyric, which I shall burn presently; for I will not have such an encomiastic letter found in my possession, lest I should seem to have been pleased with it. I enjoin you, as a penance, not to contradict one tittle I have said here; for I am not begging more compliments, and shall take it seriously ill if you ever pay me another. We have been friends above forty years; I am satisfied of your sincerity and affection; but does it become us, at past threescore each, to be saying fine things to one another? Consider how soon we shall both be nothing!

I assure you, with great truth, I am at this present very sick of my little vapour of fame. My Tragedy has wandered into the hands

[1] Madame d'Aulnoy, the contemporary of Perrault, and, like him, a writer of fairy tales. She was the authoress of 'The Lady's Travels in Spain,' and many other works, which have been translated into English.—Wright.

of some banditti booksellers, and I am forced to publish it myself to prevent piracy. All I can do is to condemn it myself, and that I shall. I am reading Mr. Pennant's new 'Welsh Tour;' he has pleased me by making very handsome mention of you; but I will not do what I have been blaming.

My poor dear Madame du Deffand's little dog [Tonton] is arrived. She made me promise to take care of it the last time I saw her: that I will most religiously, and make it as happy as is possible.[1] I have not much curiosity to see your Cambridge Raphael, but great desire to see you, and will certainly this summer accept your invitation, which I take much kinder than your *great character*, though both flowed from the same friendship. Mine for you is exactly what it has been ever since you knew (and few men can boast so uninterrupted a friendship as yours and that of—)

H. W.

2029. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 6, 1781.

I have given Mr. Stonhewer Raspe's book for you. I suppose it will set you on inventing twenty Arts that were known five or six hundred years ago; but I do not believe you will find a Celestinette there, which was quite your own. There is a picture at the Exhibition in which Stubbs has invented enamelling oil paintings, and it looks as if he would succeed—not that our painters will adopt it. They are as obstinate as mules or farmers. Would they deign to employ the encaustic that Munt revived in this house?

The Exhibition is much inferior to last year's; nobody shines there but Sir Joshua and Gainsborough. The head of the former's Dido is very fine: I do not admire the rest of the piece. His Lord Richard Cavendish[2] is bold and stronger than he ever coloured.

[1] "I congratulate the little Parisian dog, that he has fallen into the hands of so humane a master. I have a little dog, full as great a favourite, and never out of my lap: I have already, in case of an accident, insured it a refuge from starvation and ill-usage; it is the least one can do for poor harmless, shiftless, pampered animals that have amused us, and we have spoilt." *Cole to Walpole*, 7 *May*, 1781. (*MS.*)—CUNNINGHAM. A brother antiquary, on reading this passage, exclaimed, "How could Mr. Cole ever get through the transcript of a Bishop's Registry, or a Chartulary, with a little dog never out of his lap!"—WRIGHT.

[2] A half-length, now at Devonshire House, Piccadilly.—CUNNINGHAM.

The picture of my three nieces is charming. Gainsborough has two pieces with land and sea, so free and natural, that one steps back for fear of being splashed. The back front of the Academy is handsome, but like the other to the street, the members are so heavy, that one cannot stand back enough to see it in any proportion, unless in a barge moored in the middle of the Thames.

Darby has relieved Gibraltar: the Spanish fleet ran into their burrows, as if Lord Chatham were still alive. I shall not be surprised if the King of Spain signs a separate peace. What can France say for abandoning him thus? They miss such gross opportunities, that I cannot but think their Ministers take pensions like our Members of Parliament.

There are published two more volumes of Harris of Salisbury—paltry things indeed! He dwells on Aristotle's old hacked rules for the Drama, and the pedantry of a beginning, middle, and end. Harris was one of those wiseacres whom such wiseacres as himself cried up for profound; but he was more like the scum at the top of a well.

When I was talking of the Academy, I should have told you, that Baretti has printed a Catalogue of its ornaments and plaister casts. He takes occasion to inveigh against Brutus for taking off Cæsar; and this Italian slave will be approved by more than Cæsar.

Do you know that I am in great distress? My 'Mysterious Mother' has wandered into the hands of booksellers, and has been advertised with my name without my knowledge. Like a legislator I have held out both rewards and punishments to prevent its appearance, but at last have been forced to advertise it myself; but unless the spurious edition appears, I shall keep it back till everybody is gone out of town, and then it will be forgotten by the winter. I intend, too, to abuse it myself in a short advertisement prefixed. It is hard that when one submits to be superannuated, it is not permitted. At first I had a mind to add your magic alterations, which in the compass of ten lines makes it excusable; but then I thought it would look like wishing to have it brought on the stage as it might be. If I do publish it, I shall like with your leave to print your alterations hereafter, for I think them, as I said, performed by a *coup de baguette*, and that nothing is a greater proof of your superiority. Pray send me another copy, for in moving from Arlington Street to Berkeley Square I mislaid them, and cannot find them directly, though I saw them but last year, and

have treasured them up so safely, as I did Gray's 'Candidate,' that I don't know where they are.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 15, 1781.

I RECEIVED your last letter on my return from York, where I had been on a committee to meet our delegates. It is not worth while to trouble you with anything on that subject; nevertheless I cannot help telling you that the meeting was numerous and respectable; no whit appalled by their ill success, and determined to persist in the same constitutional efforts. Their voice will be heard one time or other.

I am really sorry that your tragedy is likely to be made public in the clandestine way you mention. The booksellers, I believe, have an opinion, that a book once printed, and only given to friends, is in fact published: this, the Scotch bookseller Murray declared to be law in his abusive letter to me; and therefore, as I believe it is now fourteen years since you printed it, you cannot claim it as property. But hold! why say believe, when I can be sure by looking at the title? Oh! I find you printed it in 1768, so the term is not elapsed, and so my fine argument goes for nothing. However, I return where I set out, to say that I am sorry; because I really think that on account of one defect which might easily have been rectified, you will find it not only criticised but censured. I distinguish between these two matters. Criticism, I believe, you as well as I can bear, with much *sang-froid*, but to be censured for having drawn human nature worse than ever it appeared in the world, is what I think neither of us would bear with complacency. And this I fear will be the case; for could the story in general be proved true, the invented circumstance which you have introduced to palliate the Countess's guilt will make the reader recoil more than even the fact itself. I frankly own to you that it had this effect upon me, and therefore it was that I presumed many years ago to send you my sketch of an alteration. You liked it at first, and was afterwards led to reject it by the opinion of a friend, which opinion was formed on an absolute misconception. I own I was sorry for this at the time, and I am more sorry now, not (as I hope you will do me the justice to believe) from any predilection for the little I did, but from strong conviction that something ought to be done in this way to fit it even for the closet. I put the stage totally out of the question; for though very few plays, I believe, would act finer, could actors be found equal to it, and if the guilt were softened, yet I had not this in my consideration; because you had declared to me your resolution of never bringing it on the stage; and therefore what I did was merely for the sake of having its great merit in point of contrivance, costume, pathos, character, &c., thoroughly allowed by the reader, who I was afraid would find his moral feelings revolt, as mine had done, from that circumstance, and therefore not give that approbation which was justly due to the parts, from that one capital blemish in the whole. This it was which induced me to take the liberty I did with you at a time, when I could not boast that I had so much of your friendship as I verily believe I have at present. I really then thought it *hazardé;* yet I could not refrain from doing it, because I wished that a play of so much merit might be freed from a fault which appeared to me so striking, and which I thought I saw might be done by so slight a remedy; for the alteration so little affects the plot and characters, that it does not even affect Lady Di's drawings: if it did, I know you would reject it without mercy, for I firmly believe you value them more than the work they belong to; but this is a digression.

After teasing you so long on this subject, I will only add, that I have two copies of the tragedy [The Mysterious Mother]; one given me by you, the other left me by Mr. Gray. In one of these I have inserted my alterations, which I will bring up with me the latter end of June, for I really meditate a visit to you as soon as my diocesan has executed his visitation. Here the two words are precisely used as they are in Soame Jenyns's 'World;' but be not afraid, my visit will only be a *bis*, for I shall

2030. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday evening, May 6, 1781.

I SUPPED with your Countess on Friday at Lord Frederick Campbell's, where I heard of the relief of Gibraltar by Darby. The Spanish fleet kept close in Cadiz: however, he lifted up his leg, and just squirted contempt on them. As he is disembarrassed of his transports, I suppose their ships will scramble on shore rather than fight. Well, I shall be perfectly content with our fleet coming back in a whole skin; it will be enough to have outquixoted Don Quixote's own nation. As I knew your Countess would write the next day, I waited till she was gone out of town, and would not have much to tell you—not that I have either; and it is giving myself an air to pretend to know more at Twickenham than she can at Henley. Though it is a bitter north-east, I came hither to-day to look at my lilacs, though *à la glace;* and to get from pharaoh, for which there is a rage. I doted on it above thirty years ago; but it is not decent to sit up all night now with boys and girls. My nephew, Lord Cholmondeley, the banker *à la mode,* has been demolished. He and his associate, Sir Willoughby Aston, went early t'other night to Brooks's, before Charles Fox and Fitzpatrick, who keep a bank there, were come; but they soon arrived, attacked their rivals, broke their bank, and won above four thousand pounds. "There," said Fox, "so should all usurpers be served!" He did still better; for he sent for his tradesmen, and paid as far as the money would go. In the mornings he continues his war on Lord North, but cannot break *that* bank. The Court has carried a secret committee for India affairs, and it is supposed that Rumbold is to be the sacrifice; but as he is near as rich as Lord Clive, I conclude he will escape by the same golden key.

I told you in my last that Tonton was arrived. I brought him

have a hundred others to make in the month which I allot for this southern expedition, in August. I am tied neck and heels to my York residence.

I have but just now received Raspe's book; many thanks to you for it. From what I have seen I think it very curious; the other book, in defence of Milton against Johnson (which I believe also comes from you), is only a republication of what was published in the 'Memoirs of Hollis.'

Believe me, dear Sir,
Most faithfully yours,
W. MASON

this morning to take possession of his new villa, but his inauguration has not been at all pacific. As he has already found out that he may be as despotic as at Saint Joseph's, he began with exiling my beautiful little cat; upon which, however, we shall not quite agree. He then flew at one of my dogs, who returned it by biting his foot till it bled, but was severely beaten for it. I immediately rung for Margaret [his housekeeper] to dress his foot; but in the midst of my tribulation could not keep my countenance; for she cried, "Poor little thing, he does not understand my language!" I hope she will not recollect, too, that he is a Papist!

Berkeley Square, Tuesday, May 8.

I came before dinner, and find your long letter of the 3rd. You have mistaken Tonton's sex, who is a cavalier, and a little of the *mousquetaire* still; but if I do not correct his vivacities, at least I shall not encourage them like my dear old friend.

You say nothing of your health, therefore I trust it is quite re-established: my own is most flourishing for me. They say the Parliament will rise by the birthday; not that it seems to be any grievance or confinement to anybody. I hope you will soon come and enjoy a quiet summer under the laurels of your own conscience. They are at least as spreading as anybody's else, and the soil will preserve their verdure for ever. Methinks we western powers might as well make peace, since we make war so clumsily. Yet I doubt the awkwardness of our enemies will not have brought down our stomach. Well, I wish for the sake of mankind there was an end of their sufferings! Even spectators are not amused—the whole war has passed like the riotous murmurs of the upper-gallery before the play begins: they have pelted the candle-snuffers, the stage has been swept, the music has played, people have taken their places, but the deuce a bit of any performance! And when folks go home, they will have seen nothing but a farce, that hast cost fifty times more than the best tragedy.

2031. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 6, 1781.

Yes, you were in the right in your prophecy of the 21st of April, which I received yesterday. Darby has relieved Gibraltar, without opposition from the Spanish fleet, as we heard two days ago; nay,

that he braved them in Cadiz. I think our conduct was not a little rash, but I am sure theirs has been as much the reverse. That of the French is not more explicable, and I can easily believe the King of Spain will resent it.

I am grieved to hear you complain of the gout, and the weakness it leaves in your hands. I wish you had adopted my bootikins. I have suffered terribly in my hands, and my fingers are full of chalk-stones, and yet you see I write as well as ever: but do not alarm yourself; your fits have been too rare and too slight to disable you. One always fancies the weakness from a fit incurable; twenty years ago I imagined that I never should walk again.

Our affairs in the East I do believe are very bad; I am surprised they are not so everywhere: but France, Spain, and Holland together, seem very feeble enemies. It seems to be a favourable moment for making peace, as it will be some honour to have kept them all at bay.

2032. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, May 16, 1781.

By not sending you the first rumours of Lord Cornwallis's victory over the American General, Greene, and by waiting for the confirmation, which is not yet come, though undoubted, I am able to balance accounts, though perhaps you did not desire Fortune to be so impartial. Yesterday we learnt that La Mothe Piquet, who had lain in ambush (no sea-term, I doubt,) at the mouth of the Channel, had fallen in *au beau milieu* of our fleet from Eustatia, laden with the plunder of all nations, and has taken at least twenty of them. The two men-of-war and two frigates that convoyed all that spoil took to their heels, and, to talk like an Irishman, are on Irish ground in one of their harbours. To-day we *invented* a re-capture by Darby, but he is not arrived. However, our loss of so much wealth will not comfort the King of Spain for the relief of Gibraltar, nor the Dutch for the loss of St. Eustatia; for I do not suppose that France will invite its allies to the partition, unless, like the lion in the fable, to see her seize all on different pleas,—I should say, *prerogatives*, to which *nullum tempus, nullum plea occurrant.*

My military details are very brief, for I neither understand them, nor load my memory with them; and for your information it is better I should not, as the quintessence is more easily digested, and can be less contested.

The Gazette of private news will lie in little room. The disconsolate widower, your friend Sir John Dick, is going to be married already; and, which is still more rash at his age, to a giantess. She is the eldest daughter of the late Sir John Clavering, and was ripened by the climate of India, like an orange to a shaddock. I suppose she intends to be a relict, and then to marry some young Gargantua.

Strawberry Hill, 17th.

I came hither this morning; but as I shall return to town to-morrow, when the post goes away, my letter will be in time, though a little ashamed of being so meagre. I doubt my despatches are grown very barren, though the field of battle is so extensive; but you must allow that our enemies are not very alert, and that we have some negative credit in not having lost more, after risking so much. As to domestic news, it is no wonder my details are lean. The House of Lords, who never fatigued themselves, are become as antiquated as their college, the Heralds' Office, and as idle. In the other House there are not many debates, and the unshaken majority renders those of little consequence. The disunion of the leaders increases this supineness. For smaller events, I go so little into the world, that many escape me, and fewer interest me. Can one take much part in the occupations of the grandchildren of one's first acquaintance? I might, no doubt, collect paragraphs, if I took pains; for certainly no reformation has taken place. Dissipation is at high-water mark; but it is either without variety, novelty, and imagination, or the moroseness of age makes me see no taste in their pleasures. Lateness of hours is the principal feature of the times, and certainly demands no stress of invention. Every fashionable place is still crowded; no instance of selection neither. Gaming is yet general; though money, the principal ingredient, does not abound. My old favourite game, faro, is lately revived. I have played but thrice, and not all night, as I used to do; it is not decent to end where one began, nor to sit up with a generation by two descents my juniors. Mr. Fox is the first figure in all the places I have mentioned; the hero in Parliament, at the gaming-table, at Newmarket. Last week he passed four-and-twenty hours without interruption at all three, or on the road from one to the other; and ill the whole time, for he has a bad constitution,[1] and treats it as if

[1] "Why he says his [Fox's] constitution was a bad one, I cannot divine; I should say nearly the strongest I ever knew, and it was the constant joke of his less fortunate friends, especially Hare, that he did not know what sickness was, and imagined a

he had been dipped in the immortal river: but I doubt his heel at least will be vulnerable.

There is a topic[1] which begins to predominate, but not proper for the post, nor one that shall be so to me; for I recollect under what King I was born, and consequently can have nothing to do with a reign so far removed as the next will be. As I too am always partial to youth,—having not, at least, the spleen of age,—I make the greatest allowances for inexperience and novel passions. In one word, I give no ear to the commencement of future history; it is a page I shall not peruse: and what are the first leaves of a book to one that can make no progress in it? I see no prospect of conclusion to the war—occupation enough, one should think, for everybody at present; and yet, unless roused by some event, which too is forgotten in three days, no one seems to care about the general face of affairs, but is as indifferent as if we were in a dead calm.

Your nephew is to come here to-morrow morning to show my house to some company; *my* nephew [Orford] is to command a small camp this summer.

My Lord has answered your nephew's letter, and tells him he is not legally bound to pay his father's debts, and refers him to Lucas —*mon Chancelier vous dira le reste*, as Kings say when they are ashamed of what they are going to do.

2033. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[2]

My dear Lord, *May* 18, 1781.

I did not see the Clive last night, as she was gone to Mr. Franks's, but I left your Lordship's invitation with Mrs. Mestivyer, who told me her sister was very weak and out of order; and so I find by the enclosed, which I received this morning. Indeed, poor women, they are both in a bad way!

I am delighted to find that Philip de Vendome was the famous Grand Prieur who had so much wit and spirit, as the enclosed from Anderson proves. How lucky that a Prince who had so interesting

spoonful of rhubarb to be a cure for all the ills that could befall the human body." *Lord Holland, in Russell's 'Correspondence of Fox,'* vol. i. p. 264.—Cunningham.

[1] The Prince of Wales.—Walpole. The topic of general conversation at this time was the connection which the Prince had formed with the youthful and beautiful actress, Mrs. Robinson, who first attracted his royal highness's notice when performing the part of Perdita, in the 'Winter's Tale.'—Wright.

[2] Now first published.—Cunningham.

a countenance when a boy, should have had common sense afterwards! I cannot say his beauty remained. Lord Dacre has a whole length of him at last, in a *habit de chasse*. It looks like one of those drunken, red-faced, old women, who follow a camp, and half of whose clothes are scoured regimentals.

2034. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

1781.

I HAVE such numberless obligations to your Lordship, and so little power of returning them, that you must allow me to take the first moment of showing that at least I wish to prove my gratitude, and you will, I am sure, not reject the testimonial, as you know it is of no other worth. You liked the picture I take the liberty of sending, yet it is so indifferent, that I would not presume to offer it, if I did not like it too, which proves that I have more pleasure in pleasing your Lordship than myself; and *that*, I hope, will give it a little value, though it has none else.

2035. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

May 22, 1781.

I AM pleased that you think seriously of making me a visit soon, but you might have retrenched the comfort you hold out of its being a very short one. As you come as seldom as a comet, I should not have been alarmed, if you intended to stay as long. My publication shall certainly not precede your arrival. I can scarce even call that delay a compliment, having already suspended its appearance. In short, my Advertisement prevented the spurious editions, and I flatter myself I am forgotten; at least I have gained time, and at worst will publish in July or August, when all the world is dispersed, and I can trust the fickleness of the age for not recollecting in winter what passed after the prodigious interval of three months. Should any national calamity happen, no incredible event, I will turn the ill-wind to private good, and steal out, while the consternation lasts.

Your objection to the Play, I allow to be fully just, and I know fifty others, but don't imagine I will correct anything; no, that would

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

show predilection and partiality to it; partiality I have, but it is to your corrections, and it shall have none other; I have said the truth. I think your alterations marvellous, and it is favourable to the tragedy, that it could produce your alterations and Lady Di's drawings; you shall have the full honours of yours, for, first or last, they shall stand by themselves in your name. I have no jealousy; I allow you full superiority, and will always avow it, and have more pleasure in the fame of my friends than appetite for it myself. As to 'The Mysterious Mother' being acted I am perfectly secure, at least while Lord Hertford is Lord Chamberlain; nay, whoever should succeed him I think would not license it without my consent; but enough on a subject of which I am sick and weary, and yet I have nothing to replace it.

It was not from me, I assure you, that you have received any defence of Milton, nor do I know anything of it, but what you tell me, that it is in the 'Memoirs of Hollis.' Boswell, that quintessence of busybodies, called on me last week, and was let in, which he should not have been, could I have foreseen it. After tapping many topics, to which I made as dry answers as an unbribed oracle, he vented his errand. "Had I seen Dr. Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets?'" I said, slightly, "No, not yet;" and so overlaid his whole impertinence. As soon as he could recover himself, with Caledonian sincerity, he talked of Macklin's new play ['The True-Born Scotchman'], and pretended to like it, which would almost make one suspect that he knows a dose of poison has already been administered; though, by the way, I hear there is little good in the piece, except the likeness of Sir Pertinax to twenty thousand Scots.

You will find that I have gotten a new Idol—in a word, a successor to Rosette, and almost as great a favourite; nor is this a breach of vows and constancy, but an act of piety. In a word, my poor dear old friend Madame du Deffand had a little dog of which she was extremely fond, and the last time I saw her she made me promise, if I should survive her, to take charge of it. I did. It is arrived, and I was going to say, it is incredible how fond I am of it, but I have no occasion to brag of my dogmanity. I dined at Richmond House t'other day, and mentioning whither I was going, the Duke said, "Own the truth, shall not you call at home first and see Tonton?" He guessed rightly. He is now sitting on my paper as I write—not the Duke, but Tonton.

I know no public matters but what the newspapers tell you as well as me. Darby is come home, but Gibraltar is in a manner destroyed

by the Spanish bombs. The Dutch fleet is hovering about, but it is a pickpocket war, and not a martial one, and I never attend to petty larceny. Adieu!

2036. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley Square, May 28, 1781.

This letter, like an embarkation, will not set out till it has gotten its complement; but I begin it, as I have just received your second letter. I wrote to you two days ago, and did not mean to complain; for you certainly cannot have variety of matter in your sequestered isle [Jersey]: and since you do not disdain trifling news, this good town, that furnishes nothing else, at least produces weeds, which shoot up in spite of the *Scotch thistles*, that have choked all good fruits. I do not know what Lady Craven designs to do with her Play; I hope, act it only in private; for her other was murdered, and the audience did not exert the least gallantry to so pretty an authoress, though she gave them so fair an opportunity. For my own Play ['The Mysterious Mother'], I was going to publish it in my own defence, as a spurious edition was advertised here, besides one in Ireland. My Advertisement has overlaid the former for the present, and that tempts me to suppress mine, as I have a thorough aversion to its appearance. Still, I think I shall produce it in the dead of summer, that it may be forgotten by winter; for I could not bear having it the subject of conversation in a full town. It is printed; so I can let it steal out in the midst of the first event that engrosses the public; and as it is not quite a novelty, I have no fear but it will be still-born, if it is twin with any babe that squalls and makes much noise.

At the same time with yours I received a letter from another cousin at Paris, who tells me Necker is on the verge, and in the postscript says, he has actually resigned. I heard so a few days ago: but this is a full confirmation. Do you remember a conversation at your house, at supper, in which a friend of yours spoke very unfavourably of Necker, and seemed to wish his fall? In my own opinion they are much in the wrong. It is true, Necker laboured with all his shoulders to restore their finances; yet I am persuaded that his attention to that great object made him clog all their military operations. They will pay dearer for money; but money they will have: nor is it so dear to them, for, when they have gotten

it, they have only not to pay. A Monsieur Joly de Fleury is comptroller-general. I know nothing of him; but as they change so often, some able man will prove Minister at last—and there they will have the advantage again.

Lord Cornwallis's courier, Mr. Broderick, is not yet arrived; so you are a little precipitate in thinking America so much nearer to being subdued, which you have often swallowed up as if you were a minister; and yet, methinks, that era has been so frequently put off, that I wonder you are not cured of being sanguine—or rather, of believing the magnificent lies that every trifling advantage gives birth to. If a quarter of the Americans had joined the Royalists, that had been said to join, all the Colonies would not hold them. But, at least, they have been like the trick of kings and queens at cards; where one of two goes back every turn to fetch another. However, this is only for conversation for the moment. With such aversion to disputation, I have no zeal for making converts to my own opinion, not even on points that touch me nearer.

Thursday, May 31.

If you see the papers, you will find that there was a warm debate yesterday on a fresh proposal from Hartley[1] for pacification with America; in which the Ministers were roundly reproached with their boasts of the returning zeal of the Colonies; and which, though it ought by their own accounts to be so much nearer complete, they could not maintain to be at all effectual; though even yesterday a report was revived of a second victory of Lord Cornwallis. This debate prevented another on the Marriage Bill, which Charles Fox wants to get repealed, and which he told me he was going to labour. I mention this from the circumstance of the moment when he told me so. I had been to see if Lady Aylesbury was come to town: as I came up St. James's-street, I saw a cart and porters at Charles's door; coppers and old chests of drawers loading. In short, his success at faro has awakened his host of creditors; but unless his bank had swelled to the size of the Bank of England, it could not have yielded a sop a-piece for each. Epsom, too, had been unpropitious; and one creditor has actually seized and carried off his goods, which did not seem worth removing. As I returned full of this scene, whom should I find sauntering by my own door but Charles? He came up and talked

[1] On the preceding day, Mr. Hartley had moved for leave to bring in a bill to invest the Crown with sufficient power to treat upon the means of restoring peace with the provinces of North America. It was negatived by 106 against 72.—Wright.

to me at the coach-window, on the Marriage Bill,[1] with as much *sang-froid* as if he knew nothing of what had happened. I have no admiration for insensibility to one's own faults, especially when committed out of vanity. Perhaps the whole philosophy consisted in the commission. If *you* could have been as much to blame, the last thing you would bear well would be your own reflections. The more marvellous Fox's parts are, the more one is provoked at his follies, which comfort so many rascals and blockheads, and make all that is admirable and amiable in him only matter of regret to those who like him as I do.[2]

I did intend to settle at Strawberry on Sunday; but must return on Thursday, for a party made at Marlborough-house for Princess Amelia. I am continually tempted to retire entirely; and should, if I did not see how very unfit English tempers are for living quite out of the world. We grow abominable peevish and severe on others, if we are not constantly rubbed against and polished by them. I need not name friends and relations of yours and mine as instances. My prophecy on the short reign of faro is verified already. The bankers find that all the calculated advantages of the game do not balance pinchbeck *parolis* and debts of honourable women. The bankers, I think, might have had a previous and more generous reason, the very bad air of holding a bank:—but this country is as hardened against the *petite morale*, as against the greater.—What should I think of the world if I quitted it entirely?

2037. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, June 3, 1781.

You know I have more philosophy about *you* than courage, yet for once I have been very brave. There was an article in the papers last week that said, a letter from Jersey mentioned apprehensions of being attacked by four thousand French. Do you know that

[1] On the 7th of June, Mr. Fox moved for leave to bring in a bill to amend the act of the 26th of George the Second, for preventing clandestine marriages. The bill passed the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords.—Wright.

[2] "Mr. Fox never had much intimate intercourse with Horace Walpole; did not, I think, like him at all; had no opinion of his judgment or conduct; probably had imbibed some prejudice against him, for his ill-usage of his father; and certainly entertained an unfavourable, and even unjust, opinion of his abilities as a writer." *Lord Holland, in Russell's Fox*, vol. i. p. 276.—Cunningham.

I treated the paragraph with scorn? No, no; I am not afraid for your island, when you are at home in it, and have had time to fortify it, and have sufficient force. No, no; it will not be surprised when you are there, and when our fleet is returned, and Digby before Brest. However, with all my valour, I could not help going to your brother to ask a few questions; but he had heard of no such letter. The French would be foolish, indeed, if they ran their heads a third time against your rocks, when watched by the most vigilant of all governors.

Your nephew George[1] is arrived with the fleet: my door opened t'other morning; I looked towards the common horizon of heads, but was a foot and a half below any face. The handsomest giant in the world made but one step cross my room, and seizing my hand, gave it such a robust gripe that I squalled; for he crushed my poor chalk-stones to powder.[2] When I had recovered from the pain of his friendly salute, I said, "It must be George Conway! and yet, is it possible? Why, it is not fifteen months ago since you was but six feet high!" In a word, he is within an inch of Robert and Edward, with larger limbs; almost as handsome as Hugh, with all the bloom of youth; and, in short, another of those comely sons of Anak, the breed of which your brother and Lady Hertford have piously restored for the comfort of the daughters of Sion. He is delighted with having tapped his warfare with the siege of Gibraltar, and burns to stride to America. The town, he says, is totally destroyed, and between two and three hundred persons were killed. Well, it is pity Lady Hertford has done breeding: we shall want such a race to repeople even the ruins we do not lose! The rising generation does give one some hopes. I confine myself to some of this year's birds. The young William Pitt[3] has again displayed paternal oratory. The other day, on the Commission of Accounts, he answered Lord North, and tore him limb from limb. If Charles Fox could feel, one should think such a rival, with an unspotted character, would rouse him. What if a Pitt and Fox should again be rivals! A still newer orator has

[1] Lord George Seymour Conway, seventh son of Francis, first Earl and Marquis of Hertford; born in 1763.—WRIGHT.

[2] Lord George Seymour, then called Conway, has assured me that he never shook hands in his life with Walpole, and that all this is pure invention. *Croker* (MS.)—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] "The young William Pitt," afterwards, as Walpole anticipated, the proud rival of Charles Fox, and for so long a period the prime minister of England, delivered his maiden speech in the House of Commons, on the 26th of February, in favour of Mr Burke's bill for an economical reform in the civil list.—WRIGHT.

appeared in the India business, a Mr. Bankes,[1] and against Lord North too; and with a merit that the very last crop of orators left out of their rubric—modesty. As young Pitt is modest too, one would hope some genuine English may revive![2]

Tuesday, June 5.

This is the season of opening my cake-house. I have chosen a bad spot, if I meant to retire; and calculated ill, when I made it a puppet-show. Last week we had two or three mastiff-days; for they were fiercer than our common dog-days. It is cooled again; but rain is as great a rarity as in Egypt; and father Thames is so far from being a Nile, that he is dying for thirst himself. But it would be prudent to reserve paragraphs of weather till people are gone out of town, for then I can have little to send you else from hence.

Berkeley Square, June 6.

As soon as I came to town to-day Le Texier called on me, and told me he has miscarried of 'Pygmalion.' The expense would have mounted to 150*l.*, and he could get but sixty subscribers at a guinea a-piece. I am glad his experience and success have taught him thrift. I did not expect it. Sheridan had a heavier miscarriage last night. The two Vestris had imagined a fête, and, concluding that whatever they designed would captivate the town and its purses, were at the expense of 1200*l.*, and, distributing tickets at two guineas a-piece, disposed of not two hundred. It ended in a bad opera, that began three hours later than usual, and at quadruple the price. There were bushels of dead flowers, lamps, country-dances—and a cold supper. Yet they are not abused as poor Le Texier was last year.

June 8.

I conclude my letter, and I hope our present correspondence, very agreeably; for your brother told me last night, that you have written to Lord Hillsborough for leave to return. If all our governors could leave their dominions in as good plight, it were lucky. Your brother owned, what the 'Gazette' with all its

[1] Henry Bankes, Esq., of Kingston Hall. He represented Corfe-Castle from 1780 to 1826, and the county of Dorset from that time until 1831. In 1818 he published 'The Civil and Constitutional History of Rome, from the Foundation to the Age of Augustus,' in two volumes, 8vo; and died in 1834.—Wright.

[2] Mr. Wilberforce, in a letter to a friend, of the 9th of June, says,—"The papers will have informed you how Mr. William Pitt, second son of the late Lord Chatham, has distinguished himself: he comes out as his father did, a ready-made orator, and I doubt not but that I shall, one day or other see him the first man in the country." *Life*, vol. i. p. 22.—Wright.

circumstances cannot conceal, that Lord Cornwallis's triumphs have but increased our losses, without leaving any hopes. I am told that his army, which when he parted from Clinton amounted to seventeen thousand men, does not now contain above as many hundred, except the detachments. The 'Gazette,' to my sorrow and your greater sorrow, speaks of Colonel O'Hara having received two dangerous wounds. Princess Amelia was at Marlborough-house last night, and played at faro till twelve o'clock. There ends the winter campaign! I go to Strawberry Hill to morrow; and I hope, *à l'Irlandaise*, that the next letter I write to you—will be not to write to you any more.

2038. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, June 8, 1781.

The late 'Gazette,' boiled down from Lord Cornwallis's relation, will still convince you how transient our prospects are from his Lordship's successes. In truth, as we draw prospects from the faintest hints, no wonder they have no lasting body of colours. We expect something from Necker's fall—no ill compliment to him. I am amazed how he could hope, or at least expect, to stand. A general reformer, a Protestant, and a man of no birth, was an outrage to all interests and all prejudices. Sully, with some less objections, could not have stemmed the same torrent without a Henri Quatre to descry his merit and support it.

The Parliament will sit to the middle of next month on India affairs, but I trouble myself with neither.

2039. TO CHARLES BEDFORD, ESQ.[1]

Strawberry Hill, June 12, 1781.

I think, dear Sir, you are so good as to pay my Coach-tax. I must beg the same favour of you for that on Servants, which I believe is due very soon, with a heavy penalty if not paid within a limited time. My number is five, a valet-de-chambre, two footmen, a coachman and gardener. I have another, but in a capacity which nobody else has, and therefore, I conclude, not included—certainly not specified in the Act; it is my printer.

Yours sincerely,

Hor. Walpole.

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

2040. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, June 13, 1781.

It was very kind, my dear Lord, to recollect me so soon: I wish I could return it by amusing you; but here I know nothing, and suppose it is owing to age that even in town I do not find the transactions of the world very entertaining. One must sit up all night to see or hear anything; and if the town intends to do anything, they never begin to do it till next day. Mr. Conway will certainly be here the end of this month, having thoroughly secured his Island from surprise, and it is not liable to be taken any other way. I wish he was governor of this bigger one too, which does not seem quite so well guaranteed.

Your Lordship will wonder at a visit I had yesterday: it was from Mr. Storer, who has passed a day and night here. It was not from my being a fellow-scholar of Vestris, but from his being turned antiquary; the last passion I should have thought a Macaroni would have taken. I am as proud of such a disciple as of having converted Dicky Bateman from a Chinese to a Goth. Though he was the founder of the Sharawadgi taste in England, I preached so effectually that his every pagoda took the veil. The Methodists say, one must have been very wicked before one can be of the elect—yet is that extreme more distant from *the ton*, which avows knowing and liking nothing but the fashion of the instant, to studying what were the modes of five hundred years ago? I hope this conversion will not ruin Mr. Storer's fortune under the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. How his Irish Majesty will be shocked when he asks how large Prince Boothby's [1] shoe-buckles are grown, to be answered, he does not know, but that Charles Brandon's cod-piece at the last birth-day had three yards of velvet in it! and that the Duchess of Buckingham thrust out her chin two inches farther than ever in admiration of it! and that the Marchioness of Dorset had put out her jaw by endeavouring to imitate her!

We have at last had some rains, which I hope extended to Yorkshire, and that your Lordship has found Wentworth Castle

[1] There is at Petworth a portrait of Prince Boothby, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and also of Prince Boothby's mistress, by the same artist—a most charming work.—Cunningham.

in the bloom of verdure. I always, as in duty bound, wish prosperity to everybody and everything there, and am your Lordship's ever devoted and grateful humble servant.

2041. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 13, 1781.

The Beauty Room, Madam, is the Yellow Bed-Chamber hung with Jervas's small copies of Sir Peter Lely's beauties, which chamber is on the ground-floor here, next to the little parlour. I placed your [fire-]screen there *pour cause*, and because it accords with the chimney-piece, which is black and yellow. Had it inhabited the Blue Room, in which I chiefly live, it would not have lasted even *my time*. In Berkeley Square it would have looked as if in disgrace and in exile; just as French Ministers, when under a cloud, feel miserable, though suffered to dwell in Paris itself, if not permitted into the heaven of heavens Versailles.

Mr. Storer has just left me: I have showed him such hosts of portraits of the dead, that if he retains their names, he would make a good Vice-Chamberlain to Proserpine on a *birth-night*, if there was any such *fête* in the shades below; but as ceremonies are of the essence of all Courts, I suppose there they keep death-nights, and then he will be more at home in a ball-room than even Lord Brudenel.

I direct this to Grosvenor Place, for though you named to-day for your leaving town, nobody sets out at the time they intended. I shall be obliged to go thither oftener than I wish. When your Ladyship found me at the Grove, it was to inform Mr. Morrice that Lord Orford has named me and Mr. Skrine to be referees with him to compromise my Lord's claims on Cav. Mozzi for money due from my Lord's mother. I do not admire the pursuit of that claim, and tried to avoid being employed in it; but, though cast off when I am of no use, they come to me when any drudgery is to be done.

I have been reading a book as heterogeneous from my pursuits as Mr. Storer's new profession from his—Mr. Beckford's on Hunting; and as I always reckon that any book pays me in which I find *one* passage that pleases me or tells me something new (I mean that I care to learn, for as to novelty, every book of science could tell me what I don't know), I found one jewel in Mr. Beckford's, for which I would have perused a folio. His huntsman christened one

of his hounds, *Lyman*. "Lyman!" said the squire; "why, James, what does *Lyman* mean?" "Lord, Sir," said James, "what does *anything* mean?" I am transported with James's good sense and philosophy. It comforts me for all the books of science which I do not understand, and is an answer to all the pretended knowledge upon earth; and if Mr. Beckford were a classic (as he will be one to those *who know of none*), I would change my motto of *Fari quæ sentiat* for *What does anything mean?* as more expressive of *quæ sentio*. I have gone through Sir R. Worsley's 'Isle of Wight,' which is in my own way, and yet, alas! I did not find *one* diamond in that dunghill—no, James for my money!

2042. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1781.

You may imagine perhaps that because I am within reach of the dust of Hyde Park, and of the dirt of Westminster, I might send you letters brim-full of news every week. I scorn your supposes. I am as ignorant as truth itself of anything worth telling you; the newspapers, like scavengers, collect all the ordures of Parliament, and retail them to dung the country, and you may have them like other chapmen. What can I tell you? That Lord Cornwallis has conquered his troops out of shoes and provisions, and himself out of troops; or that the heroic Governor Johnstone was so enraged at Captain Sutton's cowardice that he waited three hours to let him recover his spirit, and so lost the French Fleet? Pray excuse my being the historian of such prowess; I should as soon admire Mr. Cumberland's *successful* negotiations in Spain, where he stayed begging peace till Gibraltar was battered to the ground. I hope he will write an ode himself on the treaty he did not make, and like Pindar fill it with the genealogy of the mule on which he ambled from the Prado to the Escurial, and when I am a mule I will read it.

I have been reading another courtier's book, Sir Richard Worsley's 'History of the Isle of Wight.' It is dedicated to the King, and to himself too, for I see no reason for his writing it, but to call himself *right honourable*, and to celebrate his family, and indeed they have made a great figure there; one of them having been commissioned to search for Queen Elizabeth's Hawks,

which, however, it does not appear that he found, or I suppose he would have been made *Right Honourable* too.

I have been rather more entertained by an 'Essay on Hunting' by a Mr. Beckford,[1] who puts me in mind of the Country Squire who was hunting as the battle of Edge-Hill was going to be fought; an instance of philosophic indifference in the height of a civil war, unparalleled till the present age. Pray do not imagine that I think 'Anecdotes of Painting' a jot more patriotic than 'Anecdotes on Hunting:' if Mr. Beckford is of my opinion, he holds it in vain to say a serious word to the present generation. I came hither on Saturday for the summer, and you will find me as idle and trifling as if the last 'Gazette' had announced the victory of Ramillies; in short, an Englishman after Lord Mansfield's own heart, and insensible to my country's ruin. Adieu!

P.S. I direct this to Aston, though I am not sure but you may be *concioning ad Clerum* at York.

2043. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 16, 1781.

Your last account of yourself was so indifferent, that I am impatient for a better: pray send me a much better.

I know little in your way but that Sir Richard Worsley has just published a 'History of the Isle of Wight,' with many views poorly done enough.[2] Mr. Bull[3] is honouring me, at least my 'Anecdotes of Painting,' exceedingly. He has let every page into a pompous sheet, and is adding every print of portrait, building, &c., that I mention, and that he can get, and specimens of all our engravers. It will make eight magnificent folios, and be a most valuable body of our arts. Nichols the printer has published a new 'Life of

[1] William Beckford, of Somerly, the seat of the Anguishes, in Suffolk, for several years. He afterwards resided in Jamaica, where he had an estate. When living at Somerly, he published his work on 'Hunting,' and in 1790 a 'Description of Jamaica.'—Mitford.

[2] Sir Richard Worsley is better known by his splendid work, the 'Museum Worsleianum; or, a Collection of antique Basso-relievos, Busts, Statues, and Gems; with views of places in the Levant, taken on the spot, in the years 1785-6-7;' in two volumes, folio. Sir Richard sat many years in Parliament for the borough of Newport, and was governor of the Isle of Wight, where he died in 1805.—Wright.

[3] Richard Bull, Esq., a famous collector of portraits.—Wright.

Hogarth,'[1] of near two hundred pages—many more, in truth, than it required: chiefly it is *the life* of his works, containing all the variations, and notices of any persons whom he had in view. I cannot say there are discoveries of many prints which I have not mentioned, though I hear Mr. Gulston[2] says he has fifteen such; but I suppose he only fancies so. Mr. Nichols says our printsellers are already adding Hogarth's name to several spurious. Mr. Steevens, I hear, has been allowed to ransack Mrs. Hogarth's house for obsolete and unfinished plates, which are to be completed and published. Though she was not pleased with my account of her husband, and seems by these transactions to have encouraged the second, I assure you I have much more reason to be satisfied than she has, the editor or editors being much civiller to living me than to dead Hogarth—yet I should not have complained. Everybody has the same right to speak their sentiments. Nay, in general I have gentler treatment than I expected, and I think the world and I part good friends.

I am now setting about the completion of my 'Ædes Strawberrianæ.' A painter is to come hither on Monday to make a drawing of the Tribune, and finish T. Sandby's fine view of the Gallery, to which I could never get him to put the last hand. They will then be engraved with a few of the chimney-pieces, which will complete the plates. I must add an Appendix of curiosities, purchased or acquired since the Catalogue was printed. This will be awkward, but I cannot afford to throw away an hundred copies. I shall take care if I can that Mr. Gough does not get fresh intelligence from my engravers, or he will advertise my supplement before the book appears. I do not think it was very civil to publish such private intelligence, to which he had no right without my leave; but everybody seems to think he may do what is good in his own eyes. I saw the other day, in a collection of seats (exquisitely engraved) a very rude insult on the Duke of Devonshire. The designer went to draw a view of Chiswick, without asking leave, and was—not hindered, for he has given it; but he says he was treated *illiberally*, the house not being shown without tickets, which he not only censures, but calls a singularity, though a frequent practice in other places, and practised *there* to my knowledge for these thirty

[1] 'Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth, with a Catalogue of his Works, chronologically arranged, and occasional Remarks.' A third edition, enlarged and corrected, was published in 1785.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Joseph Gulston, Esq., an eminent portrait-collector.—CUNNINGHAM.

years: so everybody is to come into your house if he pleases, draw it whether you please or not, and by the same rule, I suppose, put anything into his pockets that he likes. I do know, by experience, what a grievance it is to have a house worth being seen, and though I submit in consequence to great inconveniences, they do not save me from many rudenesses. Mr. Southcote[1] was forced to shut up his garden, for the savages who came as connoisseurs scribbled a thousand brutalities, in the buildings, upon his religion. I myself, at Canons, saw a beautiful table of oriental alabaster that had been split in two by a buck in boots jumping up backwards to sit upon it.

I have placed the oaken head of Henry the Third over the middle arch of the Armoury. Pray tell me what the church of Barnwell, near Oundle, was, which his Majesty endowed, and whence his head came.

2044. TO CHARLES BEDFORD, ESQ.[2]

DEAR SIR: *Strawberry Hill, June* 18, 1781.

THE names and employments of my servants are as follow: Philip Colomb, valet-de-chambre; David Monnerat and James Sibley, footmen; John Cowie, gardener; and John Jenkins, coachman. You will be so good as to enter them at the Excise and pay for them now, and every year, and put them into your account.

I will send the account myself to Brentford.

Yours sincerely,
H. WALPOLE.

2045. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 20, 1781.

I SHALL not be able to wait on your Ladyship yet, for my niece Lady Maria, who has had a bad cold that has turned to a cough, is coming to me for the air. I expect Mr. Mason, too, who has long promised me a visit. If unengaged, I should be very glad to meet

[1] Philip Southcote, Esq., of Wooburn Farm, Chertsey, one of the first places improved according to the principles of modern gardening.—WRIGHT.

[2] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

the company you propose to me; not that I want additional allurements to Ampthill.

It is not common for me, Madam, to send you news from Court, or to contradict what is said to be transacting there; but for once I will be important—only because I have nothing more insignificant to tell you. Be assured, therefore, that the Emperor is not going to marry the Princess Royal. I have been at the Pavilions this evening with the Duke and Duchess: his Royal Highness is already returned from his extempore jaunt to Brussels, and has *not* settled the marriage-articles. If his Highness has retained Cæsar in our pay, like his ancestor Maximilian, it is more than I am at liberty to disclose. I dare go no further than to advise you not to buy into the Stocks upon that presumption. Mr. Wraxall may be more explicit, even in the House of Commons, though he knows no more of it than I do. However, I should not like to be thought totally ignorant, as I observed the depth of politics in the present times is to seem to know the contrary of all that is true—yet why should I affect more honours than I enjoy? Do not they seek me in my humble cell? Do not I want all my philosophy to combat the fumes of pride?—In a word, Princess Sophia has invited Tonton to the Pavilions; and will it be believed, I have consented to carry him? How weak is mortal man! That *I* should live to let my dog be a courtier! I do not know how others feel on such occasions, but for my part I cannot act this renegade part with *an unembarrassed countenance.* I tremble lest Mr. Fox should write a note[1] to record my fall in my 'Royal and Noble Authors,' where my Whiggism is the most apparent. My father is reported to have said that every man has his price. You see, Madam, my dog was *my* vulnerable part. I have resisted bribes for myself—I was not proof against honours for Tonton. Do not give me quite up, dear Lady. Make it your own case; if Prince Octavius was to offer Lady Gertrude his hand and his rattle, could you find in your heart to

[1] "1781, June 20. Sold by auction the library of Charles Fox, which had been taken in execution. Amongst the books were Mr. Gibbon's first volume of 'Roman History,' which appeared, by the title-page, to have been given by the author to Mr. Fox, who had written in it the following anecdote:—'The author at Brookes's said there was no salvation for this country till six heads of the principal persons in the Administration were laid on the table; eleven days after, this same gentleman accepted the place of Lord of Trade under those very Ministers, and has acted with them ever since!' Such was the avidity of bidders for the smallest production of so wonderful a genius, that by the addition of this little record, the book sold for three guineas." *Hor. Walpole's MS. Notes,* quoted in Russell's 'Fox,' i. 265.—CUNNINGHAM.

refuse your consent? I will quit this tender subject, and tell you an anecdote, that you will have as much difficulty to believe as if it was in the 'Gazette.'

A few evenings ago I was invited by the old Lady Fitzwilliam[1] at Richmond to see some pictures and Japan that were her father's, Sir Matthew Decker. I asked her if she had ever happened to hear a ridiculous story that I had been told in my youth, and which I concluded had only been a joke. It was, that Sir John Germaine, Lady Betty's husband, had been so exceedingly ignorant, that he believed his countryman Sir Matthew (they were both Dutch) was author of 'St. Matthew's Gospel.' She replied directly, "It is so true, that Sir John had thence conceived such a reverence for my father's piety, that he left him 200*l.* to be distributed amongst poor Dutch?" Now, Madam, what story is improbable after this? Nor is it possible to add anything after it.

2046. TO THE EARL OF CHARLEMONT.

Strawberry Hill, July 1, 1781.

I HAVE been exceedingly flattered, my Lord, by receiving a present from your Lordship, which at once proves that I retain a place in your Lordship's memory, and you think me worthy of reading what you like. I could not wait to give your Lordship a thousand thanks for so kind a mark of your esteem till I had gone through the volume, which I may venture to say I shall admire, as I find it contains some pieces which I had seen, and did admire, without knowing their author. That approbation was quite impartial. Perhaps my future judgment of the rest will be not a little prejudiced, and yet on good foundation; for if Mr. Preston[2] has retained my suffrage in his favour by dedicating his poems to your Lordship, it must at least be allowed that I am biassed by evidence of his taste. He would not possess the honour of your friendship unless he deserved it; and, as he knows you, he would not have ventured to prefix your name, my Lord, to poems that did not deserve your patronage. I dare to say they will meet the approbation of better

[1] Decker's daughter died March 8, 1786, according to her monument in Richmond Churchyard.

[2] William Preston, Esq., a young Irish gentleman, of whom Lord Charlemont had become the friend and patron. He afterwards published 'Thoughts on Lyric Poetry, with an Ode to the Moon;' an 'Essay on Ridicule, Wit, and Humour;' and a translation of the 'Argonautics' of Apollonius Rhodius. He died in 1807.—WRIGHT.

judges than I can pretend to be. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, esteem, and gratitude.

2047. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 3, 1781.

It would be very dissonant, from my impatience to see you, if I had suffered anything to interfere with my readiness to receive you the moment you are ready to come to me. You will find me alone from this instant to your arrival, and for as long afterwards as you will stay with me;—yes, quite alone, unless you persuade Mr. Stonhewer to accompany you, which would make me still happier.

I have found your emendations of 'The Mysterious Mother;' but as to inserting them in the text, it is now impossible, for the whole impression was printed off in a week after it was delivered to Dodsley, as I then thought I should scarce be able to get the start of the spurious edition. Luckily my Advertisement stopped that; which shows it was an interested job, and perhaps I may be able to avoid publishing at all: if I must, I shall certainly beg your leave to add your emendations. I told you at first most sincerely, that I think they are as full proof of your genius as you ever gave; and I shall not selfishly stifle them to avoid severity to myself. My Play has been already so public, that I can never totally suppress it: it is said to be printing in Ireland: nay, I think it will be more to my honour to adopt your corrections than not, as to own one's errors is some merit;—but enough of this.

I wrote my letter last night, and had sealed it; but open it again to tell you, that if you should be arrived by Friday, and ready to come to me, you would find some company that day who propose to dine with me, of which I received notice this morning. I give you this notice that you might not think I deceived you. Do send me a line beforehand when I shall see you, that I may not even be engaged to dine out.

2048. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 4, 1781.

I EVERY day grow too wary, Madam, to dip myself in promises of visits at the least distance of place or time; and expect to make few more, so little I can depend on my health, though for the last six months it has been very flourishing; but at present it has pulled me by the sleeve, or rather by the knee, where I have got the rheumatism, by putting on thinner stockings on sultry Saturday, and sauntering in the dew till between nine and ten. I thought it would have obliged me to receive on my couch a stately visit yesterday from the upright Dowager of Beaufort and Lady Betty Compton, who breakfasted with me; and, as everybody is a candidate for the latter's hand, it would have been mortifying to be lame when I had so fair an opportunity of entering the lists. However, I made shift to go through every room of the house, and should not have despaired, if, unluckily, Lady Hertford had not proposed to go to the Chapel in the garden, which reduced me to use my stick, and I doubt left the prize still to be contended for by Lord George Cavendish, Lord Fairford, and my great nephew Cholmondeley, who, I hear, t'other day forgot himself, and squeezed the mother's hand instead of the daughter's. Oh! what consequences might have ensued, had such a fit of absence seized him with another Duchess Dowager of *B!*

My niece [Lady Maria] left me last night, quite recovered. Her sisters fetched her away; Captain Waldegrave came to us the evening before, and returned with them. He is fallen away, and shows how hard his service has been. In short, all one sees and hears from the Return is a tale of distresses beyond belief! T'other day I was told of a letter from an officer in the *victorious* army of the conqueror Cornwallis, which said,—"I expect to date my next from the prison at Boston!"

Did your Ladyship hear of a Prince Sulkowski, who was lately in England? He was competitor with the present King for the crown of Poland, is hideous, and covered with brilliants. George Selwyn said he had never before seen a monster set in diamonds. This opulent Palatine came, about a fortnight ago, with his *reine manquée*, to see Strawberry, and was admitted without a ticket, as all foreigners are. I was not here; he left a card with all his titles, as Prince of Thiski, Duke of Thatski, &c., to thank me in the name of all Europe

for the free ingress of strangers. It seems the part of his revenues in specie (for it would be cumbersome to give a handful of peasants to every housekeeper) is rigidly economic (unless you reckon the list of titles on his cards). On Margaret he bestowed four and sixpence, having appropriated but five shillings to this visit, of which, prudently reflecting that he might be overturned, or lose a wheel, he retained one sixpence; however, being asked, like the Duchess of Beaufort, to visit the Chapel, he surmounted his sage reserve, and generously conferred that sixpence on the gardener!

> The Crown of Poland, venal twice an age,
> To just three millions stinted modest Gage.

I suppose it is cheaper since the partition.

I do not in the least know who Perlin was that wrote travels, of which it is necessary to unriddle the names. Pray tell me who he was, and as I suppose he lived ages ago, what he expended on *concierges*. Lord Ossory shall certainly have Hentzner,[1] and as soon as he pleases, if your Ladyship will tell me how to send him.

Do not be afraid, you shall not be plagued with Tonton, though I assure you he has a very decent privy purse for his travels; but I recollect that my uncle Horace used to say that Mademoiselle Furniture does not love dogs; which makes me allow Tonton handsomely, that he may silence such tattling housekeepers as Margaret.

2049. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 5, 1781.

Your last is of the 26th of May, and mine of the 8th of June: since that, I have had no public news to tell you. Gazettes will, perhaps, have made you think that the Duke of Gloucester's visit to the Emperor was political. If it was, the business was despatched in an instant, for no visit was ever shorter. Nothing has come to my knowledge *here* that looks towards peace; but indeed nothing does come to my knowledge, nor do I inquire about anything else. The war is not even entertaining; nothing but miscarriages and drawn battles. I believe the expense of the sum total will be the only striking event.

[1] 'Paul Hentzner's Journey in England in the year 1598,' printed at Strawberry Hill.—R. Vernon Smith.

You are, as usual, very kind about the Rolle estate;[1] but be assured I shall never concern myself about it. All my views for my family were cut up by the roots when the pictures were sold; nor would I, for the world, make interest to influence my Lord's will, even were I younger. You say he is kinder to me—yes, to serve himself. If my real services have had so little weight, I will not be obliged to him indirectly, nor will I stoop to court his rascally creatures. Oh! my dear sir, I am sixty-four, and am infirm and breaking. I do not look beyond the life of a younger man, nor have a single view left; scarce a wish but to pass the short remainder in tranquillity, and, as much as I can, without pain, and with preservation of my senses.

You are quite mistaken about the descent of the barony of Clinton. Should my Lord leave every shilling to his father's relations, that peerage, coming by his mother, would go away. Another barony, that of Say and Sele, has just now been adjudged to a Mr. Twisleton and occasioned examination into the honours that have been in the earldom of Lincoln. It struck me that the barony of Clinton, if Lord Orford dies without children, would revert to the present Duke of Newcastle, and thence to Lady Lincoln's only child, a daughter. I mentioned this to her father, Lord Hertford; he has had the pedigree sifted, and it comes out that I was in the right, though it had occurred to nobody else; so I have at least contributed to give a peerage to one of my relations.

But I ought not to have wandered so far when I was thanking you for a friendly hint; but should have thanked you for a positive present. You told me, months ago, that you had sent me a lump of crystal before my last positive prohibition. That lump I have just received, and what you spoke of so irreverently proves a beautiful sculptured vase of rock crystal. There is no end of your gifts; but there must be. Remember, reflect, how little time I may have to enjoy them: they will only figure in my inventory at my death.

The Duchess Dowager of Beaufort breakfasted here the other day, and, after inquiring about you most particularly, told me the transport you expressed on attaining the silver chest of Benvenuto Cellini for me. Oh! how sad is the thought that you are *never* to see your presents arranged and displayed *here*, with all the little honour I

[1] The estate of the Rolles was come to Lord Orford on his mother's death, and he had power to cut off the entail, and leave it to whom he pleased, as well as the Walpole estate.—WALPOLE.

can confer on them; but they are all recorded in my Catalogue, and whoever reads it will think I had no shame or gratitude. To put a stop to your magnificence, I must be brutal, and treat you as Lord Hunsdon did Queen Elizabeth, when she laid the robes of an earl on his death-bed. I must finish, for I am at this instant in pain with the rheumatism, and going to bed. I wish us both a good night.

The town says, Lord Mulgrave is returned from a design against Flushing, which failed, as his pilots were so ignorant. I hear, too, that an account came to-day of the junction of Lord Cornwallis and Arnold in Virginia, which will revive our hopes—to be again disappointed. The Parliament will adjourn next week.

This was an *hors-d'œuvre*, and you must excuse my brevity.

2050. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1781.

My good Sir, you forget that I have a cousin, eldest son of Lord Walpole, and of a marriageable age, who has the same Christian name as I. The Miss Churchill he has married is my niece, second daughter of my sister Lady Mary Churchill; so that if I were in my dotage, I must have looked out for another bride—in short, I hope you will have no occasion to wish me joy of any egregious folly. I do congratulate you on your better health, and on the Duke of Rutland's civilities to you. I am a little surprised at his brother, who is a seaman, having a propensity to divinity, and wonder you object to it; the church navigant would be an extension of its power. As to *orthodoxy*, excuse me if I think it means nothing at all but every man's own opinion. Were every man to define his faith, I am persuaded that no two men are or ever were exactly of the same opinion in *all* points; and as men are more angry at others for differing with them on a single point, than satisfied with their concurrence in all others, each would deem everybody else a heretic. Old or new opinions are exactly of the same authority, for every opinion must have been new when first started; and no man has nor ever had more right than another to dictate, unless inspired. St. Peter and St. Paul disagreed from the earliest time, and who can be sure which was in the right? and if one of the apostles was in the wrong, who may not be mistaken? When you will tell me which was the orthodox, and which the heterodox apostle, I will

allow that you know what orthodoxy is.[1] You and I are perhaps the two persons who agree the best with very different ways of thinking; and perhaps the reason is, that we have a mutual esteem for each other's sincerity, and, from an experience of more than forty years, are persuaded that neither of us has any interested views.[2] For my own part, I confess honestly that I am far from having the same charity for those whom I suspect of mercenary views. If Dr. Butler, when a private clergyman, wrote Whig pamphlets, and when Bishop of Oxford preaches Tory sermons, I should not tell him that he does not know what orthodoxy is, but I am convinced he does not care what it is. The Duke of Rutland seems much more liberal than Butler or I, when he is so civil to you, though you voted against his brother. I am not acquainted with his Grace, but I respect his behaviour; he is above prejudices.

The story of poor Mr. Cotton[3] is shocking, whichever way it happened, but most probably it was accident.

I am ashamed at the price of my book, though not my fault; but I have so often been guilty myself of giving ridiculous prices for rarities, though of no intrinsic value, that I must not condemn the same folly in others. Everything tells me how silly I am! I pretend to reason, and yet am a virtuoso! Why should I presume that, at sixty-four, I am too wise to marry? and was you, who know so many of my weaknesses, in the wrong to suspect me of one more? Oh! no, my good friend: nor do I see anything in your belief of it, but the kindness with which you wish me felicity on the occasion. I heartily thank you for it, and am most cordially yours.

[1] On Lord Sandwich's observing that he did not know the difference between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, Bishop Warburton is said to have replied, "Orthodoxy, my lord, is my doxy, and heterodoxy is another man's doxy."—WRIGHT.

[2] Cole, in a letter to Mr. Gough, of the 10th of August, says, "Mr. Walpole and myself are as opposite in political matters as possible; yet we continue friends. Your political and religious opinions possibly may be as dissimilar; yet I hope we shall all meet in a better world, and be happy."—WRIGHT.

[3] Eldest son of Sir John Cotton, accidentally killed whilst shooting in his father's woods at Madingley.—WRIGHT.

2051. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1781.

You must be, or will be, tired of my letters, Madam; every one is a contradiction to the last; there is alternately a layer of complaints, and a layer of foolish spirits. To-day the wind is again in the dolorous corner. For these four days I have been confined with a pain and swelling in my face. The apothecary says it is owing to the long drought; but as I should not eat grass were there ever such plenty, and as my cows, though starving, have no swelled cheeks, I do not believe him. I humbly attribute my frequent disorders to my longevity, and to that Proteus the gout, who is not the less himself for being incog. Excuses I have worn out, and, therefore, will not make any for not obeying your kind invitation again to Ampthill. I can only say, I go nowhere, even where Tonton is invited—except to balls—and yet though I am the last Vestris that has appeared, Mrs. Hobart did not invite me to her *sans souci* last week, though she had all my other juvenile contemporaries, Lady Berkeley, Lady Fitzroy, Lady Margaret Compton, and Mrs. French, &c. Perhaps you do not know that the lady of the *fête*, having made as many conquests as the King of Prussia, has borrowed the name of that hero's villa for her hut on Ham Common, where she has built two large rooms of timber under a cabbage. Her field-officers, General French, General Compton, &c., were sweltered in the ball-room, and then frozen at supper in tents on the grass. She herself, as intrepid as King Frederic, led the ball, though dying of the toothache, which she had endeavoured to drown in laudanum; but she has kept her bed ever since the campaign ended.

This is all I know in the world, for the war seems to have taken laudanum too, and to keep its bed.

I have received a letter to-day from Sir Horace Mann, who tells me the Great-Duke has been making *wondrous improvements* at Florence. He has made a passage through the Tribune, and built a brave new French room of stucco in white and gold, and placed the Niobe in it; but as everybody is tired of her telling her old story, she and all the Master and Miss Niobes are orderly disposed round the chamber, and if anybody asks who they are, I suppose they answer, Francis Charles Ferdinand Ignatius Neopomucenus, or Maria Theresa Christina Beatrice, &c. Well, Madam, have I any

cause to sigh that the pictures at Houghton are transported to the North Pole, if the Tribune at Florence is demolished by Vandals, and Niobe and her progeny dance a *cotillon?* O sublunary grandeur, short-lived as a butterfly! We smile at a clown who graves the initials of his name or the shape of his shoe on the leads of a church, in hopes of being remembered, and yet he is as much known as king I don't know whom, who built the Pyramids to eternise his memory. Methinks Anacreon was the only sensible philosopher. If I loved wine, and should look well in a chaplet of roses, I would crown myself with flowers, and go drunk to bed every night *sans souci.*

2052. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 17, 1781.

I DID not mean, Madam, that I should be confined *to London* till Lord Orford's business is settled; if I did say so, I expressed myself ill, as I wrote in a great hurry. On the contrary, as Mr. Morrice is so much nearer to me, I believe our meetings will be at the Grove, unless when necessary to go to town to see the lawyers, who have not yet given in the respective claims for which we are waiting. Cavalier Mozzi has complained so much of delays, that I did not care to be out of the way, and have any imputed to me. Indeed, at present, is is impossible for me to stir; Lady Aylesbury comes to me to-morrow, and I am still so lame with my rheumatism, that it is near three weeks that I have not been round my own garden.

Your Ladyship and Lord Ossory are very kind to think on me, but I am grown such old lumber, as to be fit for nothing but a garret. Were I as young as my brother, who is eleven years older, I might be amusing. I sat in admiration of his spirits and humour for two hours the other night, when I was scarce able to open my lips. He described having been to see his new house at Isleworth, after not having been out of his own doors since April twelvemonth. He said he was so surprised himself, that he could not believe he was there, and asked who *that* was, and that they assured him it was he himself. For my part, I shall sooner take myself for nobody, than for anybody else: perhaps when I am a ghost, I shall take myself for something, and *walk* at Ampthill, and even Lady Gertrude will not be frightened, as I shall be very little less than I am.

2053. TO JOHN HENDERSON, ESQ.[1]

Strawberry Hill, July 18, 1781.

I WROTE a week ago to Mr. Harris with the offer of Mr. Jephson's play, but have received no answer at all. I conclude Mr. Harris is in the country, as at least he would have been so civil as to say, No. Will you be so good as to tell me by a line whether I guess rightly? or if you have heard anything about it? I know Mr. Jephson will be impatient, and when I have done a disagreeable thing merely to oblige him, I should be sorry to have him think I had neglected it. I beg your pardon for all the trouble I have given and give you, and am, Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2054. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 25, 1781.

POOR human nature, what a contradiction it is! to-day it is all rheumatism and morality, and sits with a death's head before it: to-morrow it is dancing!—Oh! my Lady, my Lady, what will you say, when the next thing you hear of me after my last letter is, that I have danced three country-dances with a whole set, forty years younger than myself! Shall not you think I have been chopped to shreds and boiled in Medea's kettle? Shall not you expect to see a print of Vestris teaching me?—and Lord Brudenell dying with envy? You may stare with all your expressive eyes, yet the fact is true. Danced—I do not absolutely say, *danced*—but I swam down three dances very gracefully, with the air that was so much in fashion after the battle of Oudenarde, and that was still taught when I was fifteen, and that I remember General Churchill practising before a glass in a gouty shoe.

To be sure you die with impatience to know the particulars. You must know then—for all my revels must out—I not only went five miles to Lady Aylesford's ball last Friday, but my nieces the Waldegraves desired me there to let them come to me for a few

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

days, as they had been disappointed about a visit they were to make at another place; but that is neither here nor there. Well, here they are, and last night we went to Lady Hertford at Ditton. Soon after, Lady North and her daughters arrived, and besides Lady Elizabeth and Lady Bel Conways, there were their brothers Hugh and George. All the *jeunesse* strolled about the garden. We ancients, with the Earl and Colonel Keene, retired from the dew into the drawing-room. Soon after, the two youths and seven nymphs came in, and shut the door of the hall. In a moment we heard a burst of laughter, and thought we distinguished something like the scraping of a fiddle. My curiosity was raised, I opened the door and found four couples and a half standing up, and a miserable violin from the ale-house. "Oh," said I, "Lady Bel shall not want a partner;" I threw away my stick, and *me voilà dansant comme un charme!* At the end of the third dance, Lord North and his son, in boots, arrived. "Come," said I, "my Lord, you may dance, if I have"—but it ended in my *resigning my place* to his son.

Lady North has invited us for to-morrow, and I shall reserve the rest of my letter for the second volume of my regeneration; however, I declare I will not *dance*. I will not make myself too cheap; I should have the Prince of Wales sending for me three or four times a week to hops in Eastcheap. As it is, I feel I shall have some difficulty to return to my old dowagers, at the Duchess of Montrose's, and shall be humming the Hempdressers; when they are scolding me for playing in flush.

Friday, the 27th.

I am not only a prophet, but have more command of my passions than such impetuous gentry as prophets are apt to have. We found the fiddles as I foretold; and yet I kept my resolution and did *not* dance, though the Sirens invited me, and though it would have shocked the dignity of old Tiffany Ellis, who would have thought it an indecorum. The two younger Norths and Sir Ralph Payne supplied my place. I played at cribbage with the matrons, and we came away at midnight. So if I now and then do cut a colt's tooth, I have it drawn immediately. I do not know a paragraph of news—the nearer the minister, the farther from politics.

P.S. My next jubilee dancing shall be with Lady Gertrude.

2055. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, July 26, 1781.

I will not delay thanking you, dear Sir, for a second letter, which you wrote out of kindness, though I have time but to say a word, having my house full of company. I think I have somewhere or other mentioned the 'Robertus Comentarius,' (probably on some former information from you, which you never forget to give me,) at least the name sounds familiar to me; but just now I cannot consult my papers or books from the impediment of my guests. As I am actually preparing a new edition of my 'Anecdotes,' I shall very soon have occasion to search. I am sorry to hear you complain of the gout, but trust it will be a short parenthesis.

Yours most gratefully.

2056. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Aug. 1, 1781.

Do not be surprised that, though I write so frequently, I tell you so little news: I know none but what you see in all the papers. Tobago is allowed to be taken by the French, and there is scarce more doubt of Pensacola being taken by the Spaniards.

Lord Walpole's son was married last week to my niece, Sophia Churchill. It is more than your friend, Sir John Dick, is to his betrothed. He has acted very foolishly, both in engaging and disengaging himself. He sent his future bride an abrupt letter, to say he found himself too old and infirm to proceed. Did not he know three months ago that he was sixty-four? Some say, he discovered that Mademoiselle was not very fond of him: did he expect she would be? In short, it is unlucky to look well at three-score, for, in reality, nobody can fall in love with one at that age but one's self.

I have not received 'Galluzzi's History,' nor heard a word of its arrival. I will not be impatient, lest, as I am on the brink of sixty-four too, I should find I have forgotten my Italian and cannot *enjoy* it.

2057. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 16, 1781.

Don't you think in the case of correspondence that it is worse to adhere to the letter of a promise than to break it. You desired me to write to you, but you certainly did not wish I should, if I had nothing to say; yet I keep my word most conscientiously, lest you should think me negligent, though I have not a tittle to tell you. I have heard nothing public or private, but of the ball at Windsor on the Prince's birthday, and I trust you do not care a straw about that, any more than I do. The Monarch and his son sail to the Nore to-day to see Parker's fleet, and I suppose that Parker's fleet may see them, and what then?—I protest my imagination cannot suggest a single reflection on such events; I might as well tell you what I had for dinner.

What indeed does the present vast scene speak, but that four or five great nations may be at immense expense and be a prodigious while doing nothing? — yes, and that one of those nations at least can amuse itself in the mean time with the details of a hop, and the circumstances of a scuffle. Don't tell me, the world is grown an old fool, and the 'Memoirs of P. P.' will be as important as the History of the present age. If I did anything myself, I should think it as much worth sending you as the Journal of Europe; but alas! like other Sovereigns, and consequently like Harlequin when he sat on a throne and was asked, *Que fais tu là, Harlequin?* I answer, *Mais je regne.* At most, by my *de par le Roi,* I have printed Mr. Jones's Ode, and have a painter making drawings for the Description of my house and collection—and with my own royal hand I have been preparing a new edition of my 'Painters'—

These are imperial Works and worthy Kings.[1]

If you say no, tell me what they do better. Oh! but the Emperor?—why, he is running about and sowing sayings, that are to be cited by Diderot and D'Alembert. However, I am mistaken if he turns out anything but an ape of the King of Prussia.

I have received from Brightelmstone a long card in verse, from Mr. Hayley to Mr. Gibbon, inviting Livy to dine with Virgil—but it is not worth sending you; nor do I know anything that is good, if you do, now, send it to me.

[1] Pope.—Cunningham.

2058. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 23, 1781.

Your last but one mentioned your head being disordered by the gout; but, as the last said nothing of it, I trust it was a very transient attack.

You have seen in the papers all that I could know of the sea-fight between Parker and the Dutch. I believe neither side had cause of triumph: however, we boast of having driven back their trading-vessels. The King and Prince have been to thank the Admiral and fleet. The vast storm that hangs over Gibraltar does not seem to alarm us. Indeed, they,[1] of whose judgment I have an opinion, do not believe it will be taken; however, I pity the brave men who are cooped up in it. I know nothing from any other quarter; but everything is a theme for moralising, from Gibraltar to the Tribune[2] at Florence. If that inestimable chamber is not inviolate, what mortal structure is? Zoffany's picture, however, will rise in value, as a portrait of what that room *was;* yet its becoming more precious will not, I doubt, expedite the sale of it.

It is pity that they who love to display taste will not be content with showing their genius without making alterations, and then we should have more samples of the styles of different ages. Some monuments of our predecessors ought to be sacred.[3] Sir William Stanhope was persuaded by Sir Thomas Robinson and Mr. [Welbore] Ellis (the present possessor) to *improve* Pope's garden here in my neighbourhood. The poet had valued himself on the disposition of it, and with reason. Though containing but five square acres, enclosed by three lanes, he had managed it with such art and deception, that it seemed a wood, and its boundaries were nowhere discoverable.[4] It is true, it was closely planted, and consequently

[1] General Conway.—Walpole.

[2] The Great-Duke had removed many of the curiosities, and *pratique*'d another door in it, so that it was become a passage-room.—Walpole.

[3] It is greatly to be regretted that Strawberry Hill was not preserved intact.—Cunningham.

[4] Compare letter to Mann, June 20, 1760 (vol. iii. p. 318). "There was a little affected modesty in Pope, when he said, of all his works, he was most proud of his Garden: and yet it was a singular effort of art and taste to compress so much variety and scenery into five acres! The passing through the gloom from the grotto to the opening day, and again assembling shades, the dusky groves, the larger lawn, and the

damp. Refined taste went to work: the vocal groves were thinned, modish shrubs replaced them, and light and three lanes broke in; and, if the Muses wanted to tie up their garters, there is not a nook to do it without being seen. Poor Niobe's children,[1] who now stand in a row, as if saying their catechism, will know how to pity them! I remember a story of old Thomas, Earl of Pembroke: he one day took it into his grave head to give eye-balls with charcoal to all his statues at Wilton, and then called his wife and daughters to see how much livelier the gods, goddesses, and emperors were grown! Lively, indeed! for Mr. Arundel, his son-in-law, had improved on his Lordship's idea, and with the same charcoal had distributed whole thickets of black hair over the bodies of the whole marble assembly. As Niobe and the Misses Niobes are in a French room, they may come off for a quantity of rouge.

2059. TO JOHN HENDERSON, ESQ.[2]

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 26, 1781.

I HAVE received a letter, Sir, from Mr. Jephson to Mr. Harris, which I flatter myself will promote a reconciliation between them; but I think it will be better if I deliver it myself. Mr. Harris was so obliging as to promise to let me see him at his return to town, which I conclude must now be near, as the season approaches of opening the theatres. I will be much obliged to you, therefore, Sir, if you will be so good as to let me know when Mr. Harris arrives; but do not mention the letter, as I had rather have some conversation with him before I produce it. I beg pardon for all the trouble I give you, and am

Your very grateful
And obedient humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

solemnity of the termination at the cypresses that lead up to his mother's tomb, are managed with exquisite judgment; and though Lord Peterborough assisted him

'To form his quincunx, and to rank his vines,'

those were not the most pleasing ingredients of his little perspective." *Walpole's Essay on Modern Gardening.*—CUNNINGHAM.

[1] The Great-Duke had fetched from Rome the group of Niobe and her children, and placed them round a chamber; by which means they remained in strange unmeaning attitudes, and no longer expressed their story.—WALPOLE.

[2] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

2060. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 31, 1781.

YOUR Lordship's too friendly partiality sees talents in me which I am sure I do not possess. With all my desire of amusing you, and with all my sense of gratitude for your long and unalterable goodness, it is quite impossible to send you an entertaining letter from hence. The insipidity of my life, that is passed with a few old people that are wearing out like myself, after surviving so many of my acquaintance, can furnish no matter of correspondence. What few novelties I hear, come stale, and not till they have been hashed in the newspapers; and though we are engaged in such big and wide wars, they produce no striking events, nor furnish anything but regrets for the lives and millions we fling away to no purpose! One cannot divert when one can only compute, nor extract entertainment from prophecies that there is no reason to colour favourably. We have, indeed, foretold success for seven years together, but debts and taxes have been the sole completion.

If one turns to private life, what is there to furnish pleasing topics? Dissipation, without object, pleasure, or genius, is the only colour of the times. One hears every day of somebody undone, but can we or they tell how, except when it is by the most expeditious of all means, gaming? And now, even the loss of an hundred thousand pounds is not rare enough to be surprising. One may stare or growl, but cannot relate anything that is worth hearing. I do not love to censure a younger age; but in good truth, they neither amuse me nor enable me to amuse others.

The pleasantest event I know happened to myself last Sunday morning, when General Conway very unexpectedly walked in as I was at breakfast, in his way to Park-place. He looks as well in health and spirits as ever I saw him; and though he stayed but half an hour, I was perfectly content, as he is at home.

I am glad your Lordship likes the fourth book of 'The Garden,' which is admirably coloured. The version of 'Fresnoy' I think the finest translation I ever saw. It is a most beautiful poem, extracted from as dry and prosaic a parcel of verses as could be put together: Mr. Mason has gilded lead, and burnished it highly. Lord and Lady Harcourt I should think would make him a visit, and I hope, for their sakes, will visit Wentworth Castle. As they both have

taste, I should be sorry they did not see the perfectest specimens of architecture I know.

Mrs. Damer certainly goes abroad this winter. I am glad of it for every reason but her absence. I am certain it will be essential to her health; and she has so eminently a classic genius, and is herself so superior an artist, that I enjoy the pleasure she will have in visiting Italy.

As your Lordship has honoured all the productions of my press with your acceptance, I venture to enclose the last, which I printed to oblige the Lucans. There are many beautiful and poetic expressions in it. A wedding, to be sure, is neither a new nor a promising subject, nor will outlast the favours: still I think Mr. Jones's Ode[1] is uncommonly good for the occasion; at least, if it does not much charm Lady Strafford and your Lordship, I know you will receive it kindly as a tribute from Strawberry Hill, as every homage is due to you both from its master. Your devoted servant.

2061. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 4, 1781.

I AM sorry your Ladyship is so like Dr. Johnson as not to understand the Grecian graces of Odes, but to require them to be indited in as Dunstable prose as a bill in Chancery. Do you think as he does, that prose only should be encumbered with learning and a hash of languages, and that poetry should be as plain as the horn-book? I believe I could expound all your Ladyship's difficulties in Mr. Jones's Ode if you had specified them. *Curled smiles*, the sole instance you produce, is not so beautiful as the next expression, *the bubbling tear;* but is very intelligible to any one who has seen an angel of Correggio, whose mouth is generally curled into a crescent, and in truth I think strains grace into almost a grimace. The clan of Howes would certainly have been more profuse on the transcendent qualities of their sovereign lady; but I believe Mr. Jones is not so zealous an idolater at that shrine. However, if the Ode is not perfect, still the eighth, ninth, and tenth stanzas have merit enough to shock Dr. Johnson and such sycophant old nurses, and that is

[1] The 'Muse Recalled,' an Ode, occasioned by the Nuptials of Lord Viscount Althorp and Miss Lavinia Bingham, eldest daughter of Charles Lord Lucan, 6 March, 1781, by William Jones, Esq., Strawberry Hill: Printed by Thomas Kirgate, 1781.—CUNNINGHAM.

enough for me. How precious is any line of Demosthenes that offended King Philip and the whole Court of Macedon!

Your other question, Madam, of who was Lady Elizabeth *Thimbleby*, I cannot so well resolve: I only guess that she was no relation of that Maid of Honour of Queen Elizabeth, who died by pricking her finger with a needle.

'The Library'[1] I have read. There are some pretty lines and easy verses; but it is too long. One thought is charming, *that a dog, though a flatterer, is still a friend.* It made me give Tonton a warm kiss, and swear it was true.

I have heard of Lady Derby's imperial conquest; nor should I wonder if her mother was immediately to transport her own rags of beauty to Vienna, since there is a monarch that can take up with remnants of charms, that indeed never were very charming.

I direct this to Ampthill, as you name no day for quitting it; yet if you have any remains of fever, you cannot change the air too soon. I have had a letter from Mr. Morrice, who tells me that he has received some of our judicial papers, but cannot open them, as he has been confined to his bed ten days by the gout. I should have said that it was only a note by another hand. Mine still writes with difficulty, though almost well; but having replied to your Ladyship's queries, and having nothing new to tell you, it shall take its leave.

2062. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Sept. 7, 1781.

The combined fleets, to the amount of forty-seven or forty-nine sail, brought news of their own arrival at the mouth of the Channel a day or two before your letter, of August the 18th, brought an account of that probability, and of the detachment for Minorca. Admiral Darby, on a false alarm, or, perhaps, a true one, had returned to Torbay a week ago, where he is waiting for reinforcements. This is the fourth or fifth day since the appearance of the enemy off Scilly. It is thought, I find here, (whither I came to-day,) that the great object is our Jamaica fleet; but that a detachment is gone to Ireland to do what mischief they can on the coast before our ally, the Equinox, will beseech them to retire. Much less force than this Armada would have done more harm two years ago, when they left a card at Plymouth, than this can do; as Plymouth is now

[1] A Poem, by George Crabbe.—Cunningham.

very strong, and that there are great disciplined armies now in both islands. Of Gibraltar we have no apprehensions. I know less of Minorca.

Lord George Gordon is standing candidate for the City of London on an accidental vacancy; but his premature alarm last year has had a sinister effect. In short, those riots have made mankind sick of them, and give him no chance of success.

What can I say more? Nothing at present; but I will the moment any event presents itself. My hope is that, after a fermentation, there will be a settlement, and that peace will arise out of it.

The decree[1] you sent me against high heads diverted me. It is as necessary here, but would not have such expeditious effect. The Queen has never admitted feathers at Court; but, though the nation has grown excellent courtiers, Fashion remained in opposition, and not a plume less was worn anywhere else. Some centuries ago, the Clergy preached against monstrous head-dresses; but Religion had no more power than our Queen. It is better to leave the Mode to its own vagaries; if she is not contradicted, she seldom remains long in the same mood. She is very despotic; but, though her reign is endless, her laws are repealed as fast as made.

Mrs. Damer, General Conway's daughter, is going abroad to confirm a very delicate constitution—I believe, at Naples. I will say very few words on her, after telling you that, besides being his daughter, I love her as my own child. It is not from wanting matter, but from having too much. She has one of the most solid understandings I ever knew, astonishingly improved, but with so much reserve and modesty, that I have often told Mr. Conway he does not know the extent of her capacity and the solidity of her reason. We have by accident discovered, that she writes Latin like Pliny, and is learning Greek. In Italy she will be a prodigy. She models like Bernini, has excelled the moderns in the similitudes of her busts, and has lately begun one in marble. You must keep all knowledge of these talents and acquisitions to yourself; she would never forgive my mentioning, at least her mental qualities. You may just hint that I have talked of her statuary, as you may assist her if she has a mind to borrow anything to copy from the Great-Duke's collection. Lady William Campbell, her uncle's widow, accompanies her, who is a very reasonable woman too, and equally

[1] An ordinance of the Great-Duke against high head-dresses.—WALPOLE.

shy. If they return through Florence, pray give them a parcel of my letters. I had been told your nephew would make you a visit this autumn, but I have heard nothing from him. If you should see him, pray give him the parcel, for he will return sooner than they.

I have a gouty pain in my hand, that would prevent my saying more, had I more to say.

2062. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1781.

The dead calm, which occasioned such a paucity of my letter, seems to be thoroughly at an end, for some time. It was but a *grave repose*. Gibraltar is besieged, Minorca besieged, New York, I believe, besieged; and I am sure Great Britain is besieged—forty-seven or nine French and Spanish ships of the line at the gates of the Channel, and Admiral Darby with only twenty-two in Torbay, is a blockade to some purpose. The wind, however, has ruffled the trenches of the latter, and driven them from their station, and they have also lost a seventy-four gun ship. But unless this warning reminds them of the approaching equinox, it is probable that they will return to their post for another fortnight. This is the prevalent opinion—I do not tell you that it is mine, for I have none. I have long found that I do not shine at conjectures. I have guessed right about nothing but that the storm would come at last. I shall go on to tell you what others think, or say they do. It is supposed that the Jamaica fleet, worth four millions, is the immediate object—and no trifling one! Some think an attempt will be made to burn the stores at Cork. What should hinder? or other attacks on the coast! If I divined intentions, it would be that France is willing to put an end to their own expense in the war, and after exhausting us so long, will force the most unopening eyes in the universe to give up the frantic vision of recovering America. I am sure we must, if we would save anything.

This is the sum total of what I can learn; matter enough to dissert upon if such were my propensity! but besides not loving talkation, it is painful to me to write. A finger of my right hand has opened with an explosion of chalk-stones; five have come out, and it is still big with another. I have nobody to dictate to, for my Printer-Secretary [Kirgate] is gone into Warwickshire.

I have received your fourth book [of 'The English Garden'], and give you many thanks. You may receive as many more for your 'Fresnoy' whenever you please, and ten thousand more for anything I have *not* seen. I am not afraid of giving you *carte blanche* for any bill you will draw on me.

Though this is but my second letter, remember it is twice as many as I have received from you; and you have not a lame finger. With the dowager life I lead, it is marvellous that I can write anything but tittle-tattle and scandal, but happily, as my memory is on the wane, I remember nothing of that sort. It is true I perceive more serious flaws, but is it lamentable to decay, when one has survived the glory of one's country? My wishes are limited now to peace—I care not what sort of peace; the longer it is deferred, the worse it must be. Only boyish gamesters flatter themselves that a good run can retrieve a fortune that is lost, and only idiot gamesters believe in luck against calculation. Gamesters we are: distress and disgrace have had no effect; we play on against those who have shown they will risk nothing. Is this credible of a whole nation? You perhaps still think that a whole nation may be corrected. I do not. Burn their cards and dice, and perhaps when they are cool they may come to their senses—at least their children, whom they will leave beggars, will think of earning an honest livelihood. However, those are speculations for those who amuse themselves with peeping into futurity. I have almost done with time, and only sigh for a few hours of tranquillity.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, Sept.* 19, 1781.

I AM always an epistolary culprit, and shall be, I fear, to the end of the chapter. Nevertheless I can now plead some excuse, for ever since I have been here I have been in a perpetual hurry and bustle;—Harcourts, Holdernesses, and Conyers, for visitors of quality, and of gentry myriads besides. This added to cathedral business, justice of peace business, &c., has kept me in a continual ferment. Yet in the midst of this I found time to write and to preach a sermon, which would have frightened you had you heard it. You may guess what it was about by its text, viz., "Yet Michael the Archangel, when disputing with the Devil, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Miss Fauquier, who heard me, as well as Lord Harcourt, gave me high commendations; and indeed I have the vanity to say, that it wanted nothing but her exterminating eye to make it all it should be. What will be the consequences I cannot yet guess, but I suspect the convocation will be summoned to meet upon it. In the mean time, like the nation with the combined fleet at the chops of the Channel, I remain (as you say) in a grim sort of repose, till our first-rate ecclesiastical man-of-war returns from his northward visitatorial cruise; and then I know not whether he will give me a broadside or no. If he does, it may afford me matter for a longer letter.

Lord Harcourt, I fancy, has by this time got home, and I hope received benefit from his Harrowgate expedition, though he is not yet certain about it. He expects

2064. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 11, 1781,
2 *o'clock.*

Though this is to go by your own servant Cardini, I shall write but three words: for, in the first place, I don't know but he may be set out before this can possibly get to town, whence my own servant brought me yours this moment from him; and secondly, as he may be taken at sea, I shall say little. Not a tittle of event has happened since the combined fleets were at the entrance of the Channel, where they certainly will not venture to stay long: the wind blows very hard to-day, and may do them great mischief. They have no transports; and, if they mean any attempt on land, it will be on Ireland: but it will be no surprise, and it is generally thought they only wait to intercept our Jamaica fleet. Minorca I conclude will be taken. I am happy to hear you are so well, as I am.

2065. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Wednesday night, Sept. 12.

I would not answer your last, Madam, till I could tell you something on better authority than my own—yet that something is but another's conjecture. I have been at Ditton this evening, where Lord Hertford told me that he thinks the combined fleets are retired. A neutral ship has met them sailing westward; and it is hoped they have suffered by a storm—this is war! One sits at home coolly *hoping* that five or six vessels full of many hundreds of men are gone to the bottom of the deep! Can one look back on the last six years and not shudder at the devastation deliberate love of power has committed—to the utter loss of power! The fleets have been seen off Kingsale; but Lord H. could not be easy if he expected any attempt upon Ireland. He flatters himself the Czarina will make peace for us, but she must first make us make peace. As

you at Nuneham, and I hope you will not frustrate his expectation. Pray tell me in your next whether Sir Joshua Reynolds be returned from Flanders, for I want to write to him. If I were to beat my brains to pieces I cannot find at present more to say than that I am yours very heartily,

W. Mason.

to any landing here, it has not been apprehended. The enemies have no transports with them; but indeed we have no intelligence neither. They have landed on Minorca, and General Murray's wife and family, with other Englishwomen, have escaped to Leghorn. It must have been a shocking separation! There is little chance, I believe, of the islands being saved. We shall be pared to the quick, while we are dreaming of recovering America; we might as sensibly pursue our claim to the crown of France. Have you seen this epigram, which, for aught I know, may have been in the newspapers?

> Oh England, no wonder your troubles begin,
> When blockaded without, and blockheaded within.

I am glad I have been a physical prophet, Madam, and that change of air has cured your fever.

I have met Miss Lloyd at Lady Di.'s. She is superlatively inflated with the odours that flowed from the Emperor on her and Lady Clermont. "We sat round him, and he put us quite at our ease." "He would not have put me so," said I; "I have seen a good deal of princes in my day, and always found, that if they put themselves at their ease, they did not at all like that I should put myself so." I demurred too, to the great admiration: I remember when the Lady Clermonts of that time wept for the departure of the Duke of Lorrain, the late emperor, and yet he proved an oaf. This man announces too much; we shall see. Then came the Archduchess, and then Duke Albert. "You know he is to be inaugurated four times." "God forbid I should know it!" said I. I should be sorry to know how often a German prince is to go through a ceremony. The Duke of Richmond told me a much better story, a sequel to the Duchess of Chandos's history, which you have heard, how she proposed the Princess-Royal to the Emperor. Mr. Fitzherbert told her he had heard of a great marriage on foot. Her Grace was mysterious—"what match?" He told her. "Why, surely," replied she, "the Emperor has not divulged it yet! I really beg your pardon, Mr. Fitzherbert, for interfering in your province, but I will make you all the amends I can: I shall certainly be appointed to conduct the Princess to Vienna, and I will ask for you to accompany us."

I have at last received all (I shall ever have) of Madame du Deffand's papers. *All*, I know, there are not, for I miss some;

but there are some very curious, and some of her own dear writing, admirable.

I have made some purchases, too, at Mr. Sheldon's, very cheap indeed, and shall go to town on Friday to see them. I have made a gold-fishpond, too; in short, I am as busy and trifling as if I were still lord of the ocean: I do not know but I may soon go a-hunting in a white hat lined with green. Your Ladyship, I suppose, goes a-shooting, in the absence of Lord Ossory, lest the pheasants and partridges should think you are alarmed. It is the modern way; we souse into diversions to conceal our panics. All the watering-places are thronged; one would think this was the most unhealthy country in Europe. On the contrary, this proves it is the most healthy, for nineteen go to amuse themselves, for one that goes for illness. Mercy on us! how we shall stare, if ever we come to our senses again!

P.S. Lady Mary Coke has had an hundred distresses abroad, that do not weigh a silver penny altogether. She is like Don Quixote, who went in search of adventures, and when he found none imagined them. She went to Brussels, to see the Archduchess, but either had bad intelligence, or the Archduchess very good, for she was gone when Lady Mary arrived; so was the packet-boat at Ostend, which she believes was sent away on purpose, by a codicil in the Empress Queen's will.

You must get some standard pomegranates, Madam. I have one now in this room, above five feet high, in a pot, in full blow. At Paris, they mix them with their orange-trees.

2066. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 16, 1781.

I AM not surprised that such a mind as yours cannot help expressing gratitude: it would not be your mind, if it could command that sensation as triumphantly as it does your passions. Only remember that the expression is unnecessary. I do know that you feel the entire friendship I have for you; nor should I love you so well if I was not persuaded of it. There never was a grain of anything romantic in my friendship for you. We loved one another from children, and as so near relations; but my friendship grew up with your virtues, which I admired, though I did not imitate. We

had scarce one in common but disinterestedness. Of the reverse we have both, I may say, been so absolutely clear, that there is nothing so natural and easy as the little monied transactions between us; and therefore, knowing how perfectly indifferent I am upon that head, and remembering the papers I showed you, and what I said to you when I saw you last, I am sure you will have the complaisance never to mention thanks more.—Now, to answer your questions.

As to coming to you, as that *feu grégeois* Lord George Gordon has given up the election, to my great joy, I can come to you on Sunday next. It is true, I had rather you visited your regiment first, for this reason: I expect summons to Nuneham every day; and besides, having never loved two journeys instead of one, I grow more covetous of my time, as I have little left, and therefore had rather take Park-place, going and coming, on my way to Lord Harcourt.

I don't know a word of news, public or private. I am deep in my dear old friend's [Madame du Deffand] papers. There are some very delectable; and though I believe—nay, know, I have not quite all, there are many which I almost wonder, after the little delicacy they [1] have shown, ever arrived to my hands. I dare to say they will not be quite so just to the public; for though I consented that the correspondence with Voltaire should be given to the editors of his works, I am persuaded that there are many passages at least which they will suppress, as very contemptuous to his chief votaries,—I mean, of the votaries to his sentiments; for, like other heresiarchs, he despised his tools. If I live to see the edition, it will divert me to collate it with what I have in my hands.

You are the person in the world the fittest to encounter the meeting you mention for the choice of a bridge.[2] You have temper and patience enough to bear with fools and false taste. I, so unlike you, have learned some patience with both sorts too, but by a more summary method than by waiting to instil reason into them. Mine is only by leaving them to their own vagaries, and by despairing that sense and taste should ever extend themselves. Adieu!

P.S. In Voltaire's letters are some bitter traits on the King of Prussia, which, as he is defender of their no-faith, I conclude will be *rayés* too.

[1] The executors of Madame du Deffand; whom Walpole suspected of having abstracted some of her papers.—Wright.

[2] Over the Thames, at Henley.—Cunningham.

2067 TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Sept. 19, 1781.

I HAVE received your letter of the 4th to-day, in which you send me your late dates. I have no doubt of having received them all, but cannot verify it, as they are at Strawberry, and I am in town. That of mine which you received so long after the term, I conclude was neglected at the office; for why should they detain it? My letters certainly contain nothing of consequence. I am in no secrets of any party, and certainly should not trust them to the post if I knew any,—still less to all posts, English, Austrian, Dutch, and Italian. I have lived too long, besides being a Prime Minister's son, not to know that letters are opened; and, consequently, what I write anybody is welcome to see, if they have such curiosity. You, I believe, find that I seldom tell you anything but what you have seen before in some public newspaper. The almost sole merit of my letters is that I mean to ascertain your belief, that, when I repeat what you have read in the papers, you may be sure that it is true, or that I at least believe it. My sentiments are pretty well known, and, were they of any importance, it is not now that they are to be learnt.

I can tell you little of the combined fleets but contradictions. Our papers say, they are returned to Brest. Others say, they are still cruising to the West, in expectation of our mercantile fleets. As variously I hear of Darby: the printed authorities make him returned to Torbay; the verbal, at sea. All I prove is, that I don't know which accounts are true. Minorca I have given up; though we read daily of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean, to whom we are supposed to have ceded it,—a little late to be sure: I question whether the Czarina would accept a present encumbered with a law-suit.

One good event I do know: Lord George Gordon has given up his pretensions of being member for London. It is still better, that he dropped his pursuit on finding that the City did not choose to be burnt once a-year for his amusement.

Though I knew your nephew talked of making you a visit this autumn, you surprise me by thinking him set out: nay, I do not affirm that he is not, yet I should think he would have let me know.

Moreover, Mrs. Noel, a near relation of Lady Lucy, and in constant correspondence with Lord Gainsborough's family, and whom I see three or four times a-week at the Duchess of Montrose's at Twickenham Park, knows not a word of his being gone: we talk of him frequently. Yet my equal ignorance of 'Galluzzi's History' staggers me. I can only suppose that it lies at your nephew's house in town, and that he has not been in London for some time. I am impatient, yet I shall not lay violent hands on it without his knowledge. I do wish you to have the comfort of seeing him; it will make me amends for waiting for the 'House of Medici.' You *will* have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Damer, whom I announced in my last.

There is a perfect dearth of all private news, as usual at this season, when the campaign is opened against poor partridges and pheasants, and which is as hot as if we had no other occasion for gunpowder! It is well, however, to have all England good marksmen.

I forgot to say that there is talk of an armistice with Holland, May it be true, though I fear peace is not so catching as war: yet, as the demon of blood has breakfasted, dined, and supped so plentifully, I should hope he had gotten a surfeit; nay, he must let the calves grow up and be fat, when he has devoured hecatombs of oxen, if he means to gormandise on. Adieu!

2068. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 25, 1781.

I DID guess that you was combating the evil one and had no time to answer idle letters. Nay, but I am glad that you have erected altar against altar and attacked the Priest of Baal in his own high places. Still I hope you will find a moment to pay your *lay*-debts too, especially as posterity will call on you for that liquidation, which said posterity will certainly never hear of your Metropolitan's Charge to his Clergy; and which he had better have given in bad Latin like Bishop Butler's 'Concio ad Clerum;' and then neither the dead Romans nor his own Westminster Scholars would have understood it. Soame Jenyns's 'Ode on Odes,' and Johnson's 'Life of Gray' are still unchastised. *Apropos*, have you seen the Doctor's character of Warburton in his 'Life of Addison?' It is ten times more like to

himself than to the Bishop, and expressed in the same uncouth phrases which he satirises.

Yes, be assured I shall go to Nuneham. I wait for my summons, and delay my visit to Park-place on that account that I may kill two journeys with one stone; for I grow very thrifty of my travels as I advance in years, and do not like to waste unnecessary hours on the road.

I know no more news than if it was my duty to have intelligence. I heard a Minister t'other night joking on the equinoctial winds which would send the combined fleets packing; how *comical!* I mean their being here. Neptune, they say, is to have a pension like Lord Dunmore for having lost his government. There is a new epigram that came to my hand t'other day:—

> O England, no wonder your troubles begin,
> When blockaded without and *block-headed* within.[1]

I cannot resolve you whether Sir Joshua Reynolds is returned or not. Is your 'Fresnoy' to remain in embryo till he writes notes on it? and how does it want notes? I met with a thought of Voltaire t'other day that pleased me, though not at all to the purpose of what I was saying. He is declaring against the possibility of translating poets, and asks whether *Music can be translated?* Your 'Fresnoy' is no exception, for you have translated his prosaic verses into poetry. I wish you do not translate his Grace of York [Markham] to Canterbury! Atterbury said in his controversy with Wake, "Many a man has been written out of character into preferment." It is the sort of martyrdom that great Churchmen do not wince at. Adieu!

P.S. I desire to see your Sermon.[2]

[1] See letter to Lady Ossory, 12th Sept. 1781, *ante*, p. 80.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, Oct.* 1, 1781.

I SEND you the enclosed very hastily scribbled, which I shall be very much obliged to you if you will correct and get fairly transcribed, and afterwards sent as soon as may be to Mr. J. Stockdale, bookseller, in Piccadilly, by the penny post. I would wish it to appear in the 'London Courant' as soon as possible. I would not give you this trouble were there anybody in town that I could apply to at present; but as you are yourself my old friend at the *Smyrna*, I hope you will not fail me.

Yours, &c.

Add this postscript.

For greater certainty it may be well to mention his Grace's text, 2 Corinth. 10 ch.

2069. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 3, 1781.

THERE may be wars over half the globe, and yet they may not furnish a paragraph to the newspapers every day, nor matter for a

5 verse: "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God."

Pray stop it carefully.

TO THE PRINTER OF THE LONDON COURANT.

MR. PRINTER, *Grantham, Oct.* 1, 1781.

IN my way from a tour to the Lakes I stopped at York to take a view of its magnificent cathedral, which indeed more than answered the superb accounts I had heard of its structure. It was last Saturday in the afternoon, and having heard from the verger who attended me that the Archbishop [Markham] was to preach the next day from his throne, I was induced to stay another morning to be present at the ceremony.

This custom of preaching from the throne it seems has been introduced by the present Metropolitan, all his predecessors having delivered their discourses from the common pulpit; in doing which, though they might perhaps do a favour to the ears of their audience, they certainly did not consult their own dignity, for a throne and an Archbishop seem to be so strictly united in what one may almost call the nature of things, that they ought never to be put asunder: but this only by the way. As to myself, a stranger, and in my boots and surtout, I made no scruple of mingling with the herd of his auditors, and stood so near the said throne that I lost not a syllable of the discourse. It was delivered with all that dignity which results from slow and solemn recitation, and its subject the government of the passions. It is not my purpose to analyse the whole, I only shall mention one single sentence, and that for a reason which I shall after give you.

Speaking of the ill effects of ambition, or, as his Grace phrased it, of a desire of pre-eminence, he laid it to the charge of the highest ranks, "that they wasted God's creation, and spilt the blood of millions; and that merely for a name, which yet they did not always attain." Now, I recollect that some Sunday in the course of last spring, calling in at the Smyrna Coffee-house, I met an old friend[1] (now gone abroad), who told me that he was just come from St. James's Chapel, where he had heard a sermon preached by this same Archbishop on the same subject. He moreover quoted the passage above in nearly the same words. This therefore made me prick up my ears in expectation of another passage about charioteering, which my friend had also quoted to me from the same discourse; but here I was disappointed, and as that sentence was now omitted, I began to doubt concerning its identity. This doubt still remains with me; and therefore, as I cannot have early satisfaction from my absent friend, I write to you, Mr. Printer, hoping that if you will please to insert this letter, some person who heard the sermon at Court will be kind enough to tell me whether I was right or wrong in my first surmise.

I remember, the gentleman at the Smyrna, who is a deeper politician than I am, seemed to think that in the two instances of Ambition and Charioteering more was meant than met the ear, and that his Grace disliked the American war almost as much as he did high phaetons, which (though I did not agree with him at the time) I now suspect to be the case; for as he retained the one instance, and expunged the other, it now seemed as if he thought the former even the worst of the two; in which sentiment I certainly have the honour to agree with him. I know it may be said that as there are no young and royal Charioteers in or about York, that instance was not for his purpose, and was therefore omitted. But then let me ask who is there in or about York that have willingly been instrumental in wasting God's creation and

[1] Walpole himself.—CUNNINGHAM.

letter once a fortnight. Besides, polished nations act more out of spite than anger, and had rather civilly murder one another by a consumption, than by knocking out each other's brains. You and I remember, a few years ago, that a King of Prussia could gallop from Bohemia to Dantzic, whisk back to Silesia, bounce like an apparition into Saxony, pick up a victory here and a defeat there, and put newswriters out of breath with following or hunting him. France and Spain are other-guess enemies. They undermine our funds, inveigle us into taxes, and never offer us a battle, but with such superiority that we dare not accept it. I own we are so simple as to humour them in this unfair warfare! it costs us millions to play a losing game, without a soul betting on our side. We verily believe the combined fleets are gone to their several homes; in the interim we are viceroys of the Channel again during their pleasure; thanks to our only ally the Equinox! The fleet from the Leeward Islands is arrived safely. You must send us news of Minorca. Our Mediterranean post-office is a little out of repair.

Thus, having no immediate object of your curiosity to satisfy, I shall not hurry my gazettes. I am tired of writing to say I have nothing to write.

Lord Rochford[1] is dead. The other Nassau your Prince Cowper, the papers say, is arrived in England; as great a stranger as any *outlandish* Prince, as the vulgar call it, could be.

Wednesday night.

Well; I find Lord Cowper is not come; which is not extraordinary, as his arrival would be after twenty years of absence. Mr. Beauclerk,[2]

spilling the blood of millions! In short, Mr. Printer, I am in a puzzle about the matter, and only know this, that if his Grace still thinks with his brethren of the Upper House of Convocation, that the American war is a just and necessary war, it was rather impolitic in him to introduce a sentence into this sermon which might tend to make his Yorkshire audience doubt about his sentiments; especially when he knows that there are at least six thousand in the county who are firmly of an opinion that God's creation has been wasted, and that the blood of millions has been spilt, for a nominal pre-eminence on that continent, which is neither attained nor likely ever to be attained. But if, on the other hand, the great prelate is convinced that the said war is unjust and unnecessary, then I dare say the said six thousand will be proud to put his name at the head of their association, as being firmly persuaded that, whoever has the spirit to tell our rulers such a truth, and the eloquence to convince them of it, will, by putting an end to this cursed contention, deserve a civic wreath, which, though seldom seen there, would be a very becoming additional ornament to a mitre. A Traveller.

[1] William Henry Zulestein Nassau, fourth Earl of Rochford. See vol. i. p. 167.—Cunningham.

[2] Aubrey Beauclerk, second Lord Vere, married, in 1763, Lady Catharine Ponsonby, eldest daughter of the Earl of Besborough. The first Lord Vere was a younger son of the first Duke of St. Albans. In 1787, by the death of his cousin George, grandson of Lord William Beauclerk, he became fifth Duke of St. Albans.—Walpole.

whom you have seen of late, I conclude, with Lady Catharine, is now a peer: his father, Lord Vere, is just dead, at eighty-one.

2070. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 7, 1781.

I BEG your Ladyship's pardon for not returning the 'History of Fotheringay,' which I now enclose.

The new Veres have been returned to England these six weeks, and I visited them at their palace (as it really was of Henry VIII.) at Hanworth not long after their arrival. All their near kin have done so too, and *tout s'est passé comme si de rien n'étoit.* Their fellow-traveller is left behind. We live in such an awkward unfashionable nook here, that we have not yet heard Lord Vere's Will, nor know whether Lord Richard Cavendish is dead or alive. *I* am so much awkwarder still, and treasure up scandal so little, that, though I heard the Brighthelmstone story, I have quite forgotten who the principal personage was—so you will not fear my repeating it. I do not design to know a circumstance about Admiral Rodney and Admiral Ferguson. We are to appearance at war with half Europe and a quarter of America, and yet our warfare is only fending and proving, and is fitter for the Quarter Sessions than for history. It costs us seventeen or eighteen millions a-year to inquire whether our Generals and Admirals are rogues or fools; and, since most of them are only one or t'other, I would not give half-a-crown to know which. The nation is such an oaf as to amuse itself with these foolish discussions, and does not perceive that six years and above forty millions, and half our territories, have been thrown away in such idle pastime. How the grim heroes of Edward III. and Henry V. would stare at hearing that this is our way of making war on France!

The night I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship last, I was robbed—and, as if I were a sovereign or a nation, have had a discussion ever since whether it was not a *neighbour* who robbed me—and should it come to the ears of the newspapers, it might produce as ingenious a controversy amongst our anonymous wits as any of the noble topics I have been mentioning. *Voici le fait.* Lady Browne and I were, as usual, going to the Duchess of Montrose at seven o'clock. The evening was very dark. In the close lane under her park-pale, and within twenty yards of the gate, a black

figure on horseback pushed by between the chaise and the hedge on my side. I suspected it was a highwayman, and so I found did Lady Browne, for she was speaking and stopped. To divert her fears, I was just going to say, Is not that the apothecary going to the Duchess? when I heard a voice cry "Stop!" and the figure came back to the chaise. I had the presence of mind, before I let down the glass, to take out my watch and stuff it within my waistcoat under my arm. He said, "Your purses and watches!" I replied, "I have no watch." "Then your purse!" I gave it to him; it had nine guineas. It was so dark that I could not see his hand, but felt him take it. He then asked for Lady Browne's purse, and said, "Don't be frightened; I will not hurt you." I said, "No; you won't frighten the lady?" He replied, "No; I give you my word I will do you no hurt." Lady Browne gave him her purse, and was going to add her watch, but he said, "I am much obliged to you! I wish you good night!" pulled off his hat, and rode away. "Well," said I, "Lady Browne, you will not be afraid of being robbed another time, for you see there is nothing in it." "Oh! but I am," said she, "and now I am in terrors lest he should return, for I have given him a purse with only bad money that I carry on purpose." "He certainly will not open it directly," said I, "and at worst he can only wait for us at our return; but I will send my servant back for a horse and a blunderbuss," which I did. The next distress was not to terrify the Duchess, who is so paralytic and nervous. I therefore made Lady Browne go into the parlour, and desired one of the Duchess's servants to get her a glass of water, while I went into the drawing-room to break it to the Duchess. "Well," said I, laughing to her and the rest of the company, "you won't get much from us to-night." "Why," said one of them, "have you been robbed?" "Yes, a little," said I. The Duchess trembled; but it went off. Her groom of the chambers said not a word, but slipped out, and Lady Margaret and Miss Howe having servants there on horseback, he gave them pistols and despatched them different ways. This was exceedingly clever, for he knew the Duchess would not have suffered it, as lately he had detected a man who had robbed her garden, and she would not allow him to take up the fellow. These servants spread the story, and when my footman arrived on foot, he was stopped in the street by the hostler of the 'George,' who told him the highwayman's horse was then in the stable; but this part I must reserve for the second volume, for I have made this no story so long and so tedious that your

Ladyship will not be able to read it in a breath; and the second part is so much longer and so much less, contains so many examinations of witnesses, so many contradictions in the depositions, which I have taken myself, and, I must confess, with such abilities and shrewdness that I have found out nothing at all, that I think to defer the prosecution of my narrative till all the other inquisitions on the anvil are liquidated, lest your Ladyship's head, strong as it is, should be confounded, and you should imagine that Rodney or Ferguson was the person who robbed us in Twickenham Lane. I would not have detailed the story at all if you were not in a forest, where it will serve to put you to sleep as well as a newspaper full of lies; and I am sure there is as much dignity in it as in the combined fleet, and ours popping in and out alternately, like a man and woman in a weather-house.

2071. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 9, 1781.

I SHALL do what you desired to-morrow, it was impossible sooner. This is the substance of my letter: the rest will be garnish; for though I have been robbed on the highway, I should not have thought it important enough for a despatch on purpose. Lady Browne and I going to the Duchess of Montrose here at Twickenham Park on Thursday night, as we often do, were robbed by a single horseman within few yards of the Park-gate. She lost a trifle, and I nine guineas; but I had the presence of mind before I let down the glass to take out my watch and put it within my waistcoat under my arm. The gentleman, for so I believe he was, declared himself much obliged, pulled off his hat, wished us good night, and I suppose will soon have leave to raise a Regiment.

I go to Park-place the day after to-morrow, but think I shall not proceed to Nuneham. I have not heard from Lord Harcourt, but Mr. Stonhewer called here a few days ago and says the house is pulled to pieces, and consequently in great disorder, which I conclude is the reason of my not being summoned.

All the papers say Lord Richard Cavendish is dead; I was scarce acquainted with him, nor ever heard any thing but good of him. My not knowing yet whether his death is true, shows you what an awkward angle we live in, and how little we hear: we are forced to

be robbed now and then at our own doors, that we may have a paragraph that we can call our own. Adieu !

2072. TO JOHN HENDERSON, ESQ.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 15, 1781.

I AM distressed, and know not whither to apply but to you, who I doubt will repent your facility in getting me out of difficulties. If I am not modest, I am at least too conscientious, to press the favour I am going to ask, if you do not care to undertake it, or shall hold it imprudent. Mr. Harris seems to have forgotten, or chooses to defer, his promise of calling on me.

Mr. Jephson I doubt will be very impatient, and suspect me of carelessness in not having delivered his letter; and yet I am sure it would have better effect if I heard Mr. Harris's complaints before I deliver it. I must be in town on Thursday for a day or two. Would it be possible to let Mr. Harris know, so that he might call on me in Berkeley Square on Friday morning? Would it look too much like a plot, if you told him so? I truly wish to serve Mr. Jephson, and yet, I fear, totally innocent as I am, that blame will fall on me, if the play is not acted this winter. You, who are well acquainted with Authors and Managers, know what jealous waspish folks both branches of those allied families are. You, who are our cousin, have a cross of good-humour, that is singularly unlike the rest of our kin.

It will make you forgive
Your affectionate relation,
HOR. WALPOLE.

2073. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 17, 1781.

MY story is grown cold, Madam, and I am tired of it, and should make nothing of it now. In short, though it has had a codicil, it has ended no how, and is only fit to entertain the village where it happened. The quintessence was that a great corn-factor, who is in bad odour here on the highway, arrived at the 'George' a moment after or before our robbery, and was suspected, and my footman

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

thought he could swear to the horse; and then Zoffany, the painter, was robbed, and his footman was ready to take his bible to the person of a haberdasher, intimate of the corn-factor; but Mr. Smallwares proved an *alibi*, and the corn-factor gave a ball—and none but the dancers acquit him—and so much for an idle story. Your Ladyship's idiot was more tremendous than our Corn—way-man.

I am not likely to hear of a place, Madam, for your *recommandée*, but will propose her if I should.

I see Graves and Hood have been tolerably beaten; I do not wish Hood unthrashed, but I had rather it was Commodore Johnstone that had met with a drubbing, instead of a rich booty. I read, too, that Lord Cornwallis is trying to house his tattered laurels at New York; and for that I am not much grieved neither. Since we are to be cuffed from one end of Europe to t'other end of America, I am glad when renegades are our representatives. I hope Lord Dunmore is going to have his dose.

I heard at Park-place that the Prince of Wales has lately made a visit to Lady Cecilia Johnstone, where Lady Sarah Napier was. She did not appear, but he insisted on seeing her, and said, "she was to have been there," pointing to Windsor Castle. When she came down, he said he did not wonder at his father's admiring her, and was persuaded she had not been more beautiful then.

Lord Richard Cavendish is indubitably dead, and so I see is Lord Kelly. As this is but a postscript to my last, your Ladyship will excuse its brevity.

2074. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 18, 1781.

Happening to come to town to-day, I found the two sets of the 'History of the Medici.' I hasten to tell you so, that your nephew may not be unquiet about their remaining *chez lui*. I do not thank you but for your trouble; for I insist on your telling your nephew the price, that I may pay him at his return. You know I have made a law against presents, and it would be curious if I broke my own ordinance in a still more flagrant instance of *asking* for them. This was a commission, and do not imagine that I would not only beg a present, but a double one.

Though I came to town on business, my impatience was so great that I could not help dipping; and, as you may guess, turned to

the story of Bianca Capello. It is a little palliated, yet I think was clearly an *empoisonnement*. I find, too, more freedom than I expected, though promised. I did apprehend that the characters of Princes, drawn under the eye of a Prince, would be softened and softened, till scarce a speck would remain; but, by that of Duke Francis, I perceive that the Great-Duke has surmounted many royal prejudices. The style seems simple and natural, and does not aspire to dignity or beauty of diction. One term, often repeated, sounds very vulgar. The author talks of the *impudenza* of Bianca's arts and conduct. This is a very gross word, in spite of the Italian liquids in the termination. In England and France we are too refined to use so coarse a phrase. Mr. Gibbon would not use it on a Pope or a Father of the Church; and to employ it on a lady, and a sovereign lady! mercy on us! What would Galluzzi say of the legislatress Catharine of Russia? of that idol of modern philosophers? whose *ascent* Voltaire called, *only a family squabble*, with which he would not meddle. This is the way in which the good-breeding of the present age mentions atrocious deeds;

Just hints a crime, and hesitates dislike.

The torpor of the times has been a little roused this week by some packets of events. The Admirals Graves and Hood have attacked a superior French fleet at the mouth of the Chesapeak, and have not beaten it. It is the business of the French, not ours, to say who did beat. I doubt we did not gain a naval crown, and have lost a seventy-four gun ship. In return, Commodore Johnstone has taken four rich Dutchmen, and our India fleet is arrived—which Johnstone is not. However, he is the hero of the day, as Admiral Rodney has a little over-gilt his own statue,[1] and Lord Cornwallis is trying to scramble to New York, without having quite conquered America. Lord Hawke[2] is dead, and does not seem to have bequeathed his mantle to anybody.

I do not find the least curiosity stirring about Minorca. If it is lost, the public will be content should it produce a court-martial, which is found to be an excellent soporific on all our disasters.—We have wherewithal to pass the winter very agreeably. Adieu!

[1] By the plunder of St. Eustatia.—WALPOLE.
[2] A capital navy hero in the war of 1759.—WALPOLE.

2075. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Oct. 26, 1781.

In good sooth, Madam, I do not know who is the grandmother of Charity, unless it means the present Duke of Montagu, in whose breasts I conclude there is not a drop of the milk of charity left, *vu* the dirt he has discovered in his transactions with Lady Beaulieu, since the death of Tisiphone her sister. Old Marlborough or old Duchess Montagu could not be that grandmother, unless they may be called the grandames of charity—children, who would willingly have left some of their own children to the parish. The friend who wrote the verses was perhaps Bishop Hurd, or Lord Brudenel, or Lady Greenwich, or one of the King's footmen.

I have heard a very indifferent account of poor Mr. Morrice from Lady Margaret Compton, who says Dr. Turton has a bad opinion of him. He is at Bath, and that delays our consultation on Cav. Mozzi's affair. Of my nephew, I have received just such accounts as Lord Ossory gives. I wish he would fix on his isthmus of Corinth for the scene of an exploit he has got in that head which all the world finds so sensible. He is going to set up *at Leghorn* a monument for his mother, and has sent me the epitaph for my opinion. It says she died *universally lamented.* Oh! that he would translate it into Greek or Coptic, or any *lingo* that every English sailor could not understand! I have answered very respectfully, as becomes a dutiful uncle, without giving any opinion or advice at all; for to contradict a madman is to persuade him. If he thinks I approve, he may change his mind.

In the mean time, while Mr. Morrice is incapable of attending our Court, I have been transacting another knotty affair, of which I despaired, but have brought to an amicable hearing. Mr. Jephson's play on my 'Otranto' has been committed to my care, on and off, for these twelve months. But he had chosen other guardians too. A lady genius persuaded him to give it to Mr. Sheridan, who having the opera and the nation to regulate besides, and some plays to write, neglected the poor Irish orphan. Then I was desired to recommend it to t'other house. Unfortunately a third guardian was appointed; and, though your Milesians have hearts unsteady as the equator, they have always an ecliptic that crosses their heads, and gives them a devious motion. When I applied to Mr. Manager

Harris, it came out that the Hibernian trustee had originally engaged the play to him; and when Mr. Harris complained of the breach of promise, he was not softened by the too zealous friend. There had been twenty other mismanagements, and Mr. Harris would not hear the play named. As I have seen other negotiators of late miscarry by bullying first and bending afterwards, I took the counterpart, and in two days so softened the majesty of Covent-Garden, that he has not only engaged to act the tragedy, but by the beginning of December, when my utmost hopes did not expect to see it before spring.

Nor was this my only difficulty. Mrs. Yates is dying, and the sole remaining actress, Miss Young, refused the part of the mother, because, as she said, Mrs. Crawfurd had refused it. Mr. Harris begged me to write to Miss Young. I did; and to turn aside what I guessed to be the real motive of the refusal, I told her I would not suspect that Mrs. Crawfurd declined the part from preferring that of the daughter, because Mrs. Crawfurd must know the world too well not to be aware, that when a gentlewoman of middle age appears in a very juvenile part, it does but make that middle age more apparent. There was so much sugar strewed over this indirect truth, that even there I have succeeded too, and Miss Young has complied. I am to attend rehearsals, and give advice on scenes, dresses, &c., and so must be frequently in town. In short, my uncle never negotiated with more abilities. Pray, Madam, respect my various talents. I have lately acted as a Justice of Peace; am to sit as Chancellor in a Court of Equity on my nephew's dispute with Mozzi; and have now been Plenipotentiary to the Sovereign of a theatre! What pity that I should have cut my abilities so late! Well! thus I unwrinkle my old age with whatever pastime presents itself, instead of growing ill-humoured or covetous, the resources of longevity.

Your Ladyship, however, seems to think that I have a good deal of wrongheadedness in my composition. I confess I have not that verbal patriotism which bids one say one wishes what one does not wish. I confess I do wish better to the Americans than to the Scotch, because the cause of the former is more just. The English in America are as much my countrymen as those born in the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields; and, when my countrymen quarrel, I think I am free to wish better to the sufferers than to the aggressors. I do look on Lord Cornwallis as a renegade. He was one of five who protested against the Stamp Act. He there-

fore had no principles *then*, or has none now; and neither in compliance with the vulgar or the powerful, will I say I approve him.

If an alderman's son, not content with a decent fortune and a large portion of well-deserved immortality, is proud of becoming toad-eater to a Scotch Chief Justice, of having a few more words said to him at a levee than are vouchsafed to Dr. Dominiceti, and of being ordered to pen memorials for such boobies as Lord Suffolk and Lord Hillsborough, I do not wonder. But when a gentleman, a man of quality, sells himself for the paltry honours and profits that he must quit so soon, and leave nothing but a tarnished name behind him, he has my utter contempt; nor can I see how my love of my country obliges me to wish well to what I despise. Your Ladyship is more charitable, or more patriotic, or perhaps your sentiments may not be so rooted as mine, who do prefer the liberties of mankind to any local circumstances. Were I young and of heroic texture, I would go to America; as I am decrepit and have the bones of a sparrow, I must die on my perch; and when you turn courtier, I will peck my bread and water out of another hand.

For France I have no predilection for it; nor is my respect for it augmented. It does so little, it makes so poor a figure, that one would think Lord North was Minister there as well as here. In truth, Madam, I have no platonic passions. I cannot love what I do not esteem. We have forfeited all titles to respect. I appeal to the unalterable nature of justice whether this war with America is a just one? If it is not, can an honest man wish success to it? and I appeal to posterity whether it can find in all our annals so disgraceful a period as the present. You, Madam, as a sound patriot, may wish that Admiral Darby with an inferiority of two-thirds had beaten the combined fleets; which he did not attempt to beat: but give me leave to say that you should recur to your piety. Piety believes in miracles; miracles alone can counterpoise superior weight of metal, or counteract folly, which has thrown away the empire of the ocean. It is true, we have still the jaw-bone of an ass left; but somehow or other it has lost its wonder-working efficacy: but come, Madam, I will show that I can be impartial too. I do assure you I have not the smallest apprehension from Lord Cornwallis's victorious arms; and I do pray for the duration of the present Ministry, for I am sure they will never conquer America, or anything else.

I had heard the story of Lady Sarah [Napier] and the Prince, and know it is true. The spindle-tree I have,—paper enough I have not to reply to other articles in your Ladyship's letter. I beg your pardon for the length and tediousness of this, but I could not bear not to justify myself in your eyes; I have spoken the truth, I do not know whether with any success. My sentiments have always been the same, and I believe firmly will never alter.

2076. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 29, 1781.

I HAVE received a letter to-night from the younger Sir Horace, and answer it to both or either, for this reason: the courier may be detained here, like the last, for several days; in which case, nay, without that, the nephew will probably have left Florence before the courier gets back, as Mrs. Noel says the junior Sir is to be here by the meeting of Parliament. To him, if not set out, I must say, that nothing could be more unnecessary than an apology to me for not advertising me of this journey; and, having been so constantly kind to me, I was not in the least suspicious of his wanting any of his usual goodness for me. I must again quote Mrs. Noel, who, not having heard of his setting out till some time after he was gone, concluded, from its being so late in the season, that he would not go at all. Had I had anything particular to send, I should certainly have informed myself more carefully. In good truth, I never am diffident of my friends, nor ever saw the smallest ground in Sir Horace for being so.

Now, my old correspondent, to you. I am charmed with the good account your nephew gives me of you. He says you have no complaint but a little trembling of your hand. I, who am so nervous that the sudden clapping of a door makes me shudder all over, call that nothing. I have lost the use of several joints of my fingers, and often fear I shall lose entirely the service of my right hand. Such alarms, amongst other reflections reconcile one to the parting with one's whole self;—but what everybody that has common sense must feel, it is idle to detail.

I must own, I do expect the loss of Minorca. It is true, nothing can be more bungling than our enemies. I have often thought, and, I believe, said to you, that Russia, Prussia, and Austria must look with infinite contempt on our western warfare. *They* divided a

kingdom in fewer months than we have been years in fighting drawn battles. They give us room to make a kind of figure by letting us make head at all against France, Spain, Holland, and America. Yet I am not so sanguine as your nephew. I think it would be frenzy for our fleet to pass the Straits at this time of year for the relief of Minorca. Separated they are, I believe, the combined fleets; but when we did not venture to encounter them at the mouth of our *own* channel—that *was!* would it be wise to invite them to re-assemble and empound us in the Mediterranean, or reduce us to fight our way against their superiority at the door of it? Clumsy as they are, I doubt they are not dull to that degree. Nay, I fear they do know that, even in this dilatory way, they will ruin us by the expense we are at. I should have thought they might have done their business sooner, unless they look on our exhausting ourselves as more permanent destruction. Little as they have done for America, which shows how injudicious our perseverance has been, we are almost at the last gasp there, and tremble for Lord Cornwallis. I should not say so much as this but by your own courier; for I have too much *fierté* to allow to enemies even what they know. We have no particular news at present, and I will not make my letter longer than is necessary; as it is past midnight, and this must go to town early to-morrow morning.

I have almost got through the first volume of the 'Medici.' In spite of the beauty of the Italian language, the style appears very meagre. One must call it simplicity, if one would commend it. The sincerity is considerable enough to make the Medici shudder in their pompous tombs in St. Lorenzo. What a severe tyrant was their great Cosmo! Abbé, indeed! But how facile is address when it stops at nothing! Or is it *art* to stab and poison? Then assassins are great politicians. The work, to be sure, does unfold a horrid scene of popes and princes; but I don't know how—I don't know what I expected: all that scene of villanous ambition is but cold at this distance of time; one is shocked, never interested. At least, the historian wanted ability to move the passions; or, perhaps, it was impossible to excite anything but horror, when he does not seem amidst all his materials to have discovered one good character.

The only person for whom I have conceived an esteem is for the Sovereign himself who commanded the work. He must mean to be a good prince, when he enjoins the truth to be so amply told of his predecessors. He must be aware of the reflections that will be made hereafter, if he is not.

The Duchess of Gloucester has ordered me to thank you particularly for a very obliging letter that she has received from you: she does not say on what occasion. They are at Weymouth, and greatly happy at having lately inoculated Prince William as successfully as they could possibly wish. Adieu! dear sir, or sirs.

2077. TO JOHN NICHOLS, ESQ.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 31, 1781.

I am glad to hear, Sir, that your account of Hogarth calls for another edition; and I am very sensible of your great civility in offering to change any passages that criticise my own work. Though I am much obliged by the offer, I should blush to myself if I even wished for that complaisance. Good God! Sir, what am I that I should be offended at or above criticism or correction? I do not know who ought to be; I am sure, no author. I am a private man, of no consequence, and at best an author of very moderate abilities. In a work that comprehends so much biography as my 'Anecdotes of Painting,' it would have been impossible, even with much more diligence than I employed, not to make numberless mistakes. It is kind to me to point out those errors; to the world it is justice. Nor have I reason to be displeased even with the manner. I do remember that in many passages you have been very civil to me. I do not recollect any harsh phrases. As my work is partly critical as well as biographic, there too I had no reason or right to expect deference to my opinions. Criticism, I doubt, has no very certain rule to go by; in matters of taste it is a still more vague and arbitrary science.

As I am very sincere, Sir, in what I say. I will with the same integrity own, that in one or two places of your book I think the criticisms on me are not well founded. For instance; in p. 37 I am told that Hogarth did not deserve the compliment I pay him of not descending to the indelicacy of the Flemish and Dutch painters. It is very true that you have produced some instances, to which I had not adverted, where he has been guilty of the same fault, though I think not in all you allege, nor to the degree alleged: in some I think the humour compensates for the indelicacy, which is never the case with the Dutch; and in one particular I think it is a merit,—I mean in the burlesque 'Paul before Felix,'—for there,

Sir, you should recollect that Hogarth himself meant to satirise, not to imitate the painters of Holland and Flanders.

You have also instanced, Sir, many more portraits in his satiric prints than come within my defence of him as not being a personal satirist; but in those too, with submission, I think you have gone too far; as, though you have cited portraits, are they all satiric? Sir John Gonson[1] is the image of an active magistrate identified; but it is not ridiculous, unless to be an active magistrate is being ridiculous. Mr. Pine,[2] I think you allow, desired to sit for the fat friar in the 'Gates of Calais'—certainly not with a view to being turned into derision.

With regard to the bloody fingers of Sigismunda, you say, Sir, that my memory must have failed me, as you affirm that they *are* unstained with blood. Forgive me if I say that I am positive they were so originally. I saw them so, and have often mentioned that fact. Recollect, Sir, that you yourself allow, p. 46, in the note, that the picture was continually "altered, upon the criticism of one connoisseur or another." May not my memory be more faithful about so striking a circumstance than the memory of another who would engage to recollect all the changes that remarkable picture underwent?

I should be very happy, Sir, if I could contribute any additional lights to your new publication; indeed, what additional lights I have gained are from your work, which has furnished me with many. I am going to publish a new edition of all the five volumes of my 'Anecdotes of Painting,' in which I shall certainly insert what I have gathered from you. This edition will be in five thin octavos, without cuts, to make the purchase easy to artists and such as cannot afford the quartos, which are grown so extravagantly dear that I am ashamed of it. Being published too at different periods, and being many of them cut to pieces for the heads, since the rage for portraits has been carried so far, it is very rare to meet with a complete set. My corrected copy is now in the printer's hands, except the last volume, in which are my additions to Hogarth from your list, and perhaps one or two more; but that volume also I have left

[1] Sir John Gonson, Knight, long chairman of the Quarter Sessions for the city and liberty of Westminster, celebrated by Pope for his power of lungs.—Cunningham.

[2] John Pine, the artist, who published 'The Procession and Ceremonies at the Installation of the Knights of the Bath, 17th of June, 1725;' folio, 1730; and, in 1739, 'The Tapestry Hangings of the House of Lords,' &c., sat for the Fat Friar in Hogarth's 'Gates of Calais,' and received from that circumstance the name of "Friar Pine," which he retained till his death.—Wright.

in town, though not at the printer's, as, to complete it, I must wait for his new works, which Mrs. Hogarth is to publish. When I am settled in town, Sir, I shall be very ready, if you please to call on me in Berkeley Square, to communicate any additions I have made to my account of Hogarth.

2078. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 6, 1781.

I BELIEVE I am very dull, or quite blinded by prejudice, for I confess I do not feel the force of your Ladyship's arguments. Are men in the right to take up arms in self-defence, and in the wrong to declare themselves independent? Is resistance *by force* a thing indifferent, and the declaration *in words* a crime? Methinks by that rule all who joined the Prince of Orange were justifiable, but ceased to be so the moment King James was dethroned. Thus men ought to offend a king but never to punish him! I believe their Majesties would agree to that compromise.

I can as little subscribe to the position that it is the duty of an officer to obey his king, whatever may be the officer's opinions. Were that maxim true, no conscientious man can accept a commission if it dissolves the obligation of his conscience. Those very loyal instruments, the bells of a parish church, do allow a precedence to God—fear God, honour the King; but I am talking politics and arguing—two things I do not love. I am almost afraid to tell you news on that subject, as I doubt your Ladyship is less and less likely to recover your share of sovereignty over America. Lord Graham and Lord Sefton, who have been in town, tell me that the accounts brought by Colonel Conway are very bad indeed. I did see him himself on Saturday at Ditton on his way to Windsor, but he was so discreet as to say nothing, but that what he brought was not very good: that the French have thirty-seven ships, and we twenty-three; that the former have landed 4000 men, and evacuated Rhode Island, and taken *two* of our best frigates; the papers say *three;* but it is not true that two regiments have been cut to pieces, for the 45th, one of the named, is in England. He did say, that your friend, Lord Cornwallis, has the back country open to him, and he did not add, what Lord Sefton tells me is said, that he had provisions but for six weeks. We shall close, I believe and hope, Madam, in wishing an end to this destruction of the species, nor can the

most loyal, I suppose, think that even the dependence of America was worth purchasing at the expense of thousands of lives, of forty millions of money, of the sovereignty of the sea, and of the loss of America itself. We were naturally tradesmen, and had better have borne a few affronts than asserted the point of honour at so dear a rate.

It is very far from true, Madam, that I write either prologue or epilogue to the 'Count of Narbonne.' I could no more compose twenty verses that I could dance a hornpipe. My faculties are as *délabrées* as my limbs, and these are deplorable. My nerves are so shattered that the clapping of a door makes me tremble; and this poor hand that is writing to you has long lost the use of three of its joints, and I fear will quite desert me. I have now, and have had all the summer, the gout in the fourth finger. Thus my person is as antiquated as my political opinions!

I have not seen Mr. Selwyn for half a century. He has *the mal à propos* almost as strongly as the *à propos*. Others with more malice, say they perceive a likeness to *the* Lord William. Miss Lloyd is full as like to Lady Sarah. Miss Bunbury has a great deal of the Lennoxes, not so handsome, but with a much prettier person than any of the females of the family.

Genealogist as I am, I cannot make out, Madam, how Miss Sackville is Lord Mansfield's niece. You say you do not entirely believe that his Lordship gave away his niece. *Cela me passe.* To weep at weddings I know is of ancient custom, as much as *double entendres;* a ceremonial, the former, of which I never knew the origin. The more and the longer a fashion prevails, the less sense there commonly is in it. Thence solutionists, like etymologists, seldom hit on the true foundation, both hunting for some meaning.

I recollect how prolix my last was; and though you are too civil to tell me, Madam, of that other symptom of my dotage, I am aware of it myself, and wish you good night.

2079. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 7, 1781.

If great countries ever owned a defeat or gazettes ever spoke truth, you would conclude by that of last night that the Royalists in America have had shining and solid success under a person formerly called one Arnold, but who has plainly shown himself two Arnolds.

This 'Gazette' has been gleaned and new-boiled from amidst a heap of disasters that were brought over on Saturday by Colonel Conway express from Sir Henry Clinton, and which have transpired from other letters, or from the soap-boilers themselves. Two regiments even of the victorious expedition under double Arnold have been cut to pieces by the Americans,—the latter, you know, never fight.

The town says, from various letters which came over on Saturday, too, but not one of which, to be sure, the 'Gazette' has seen, that Lord Cornwallis is in a most desperate position, and had provisions but for a month, that we have lost two or three frigates, that the French have landed some thousand men, have been joined by eight men-of-war of the line, and are superior to our fleet by eleven or twelve ships. The Stocks, who have not such command of countenance as the 'Gazette,' are low-spirited.

This is all the hearsay I know. I came to town this morning to attend the rehearsal of Mr. Jephson's Play, but I do not write prologue or epilogue, as the newspapers say; and shall return to Strawberry on Saturday.

I hope your commission was executed to your satisfaction. It was not my fault that it was not performed immediately.

When will your residence end? when do you return to your flocks, two-legged or four-legged? and when shall you leave them and come southward?[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, Nov. 9, 1781.

I AM as usual an epistolary culprit or rather in a state of insolvency: and you I suppose will have no literary dealings with me till you cannot help it, that is, till some more important news from America than Arnold's depredations makes you write whether you will or no; in the mean time having got a sort of a subject for a letter, I shall employ this paper upon it.

A few days ago a Clergyman in this neighbourhood who is in a state of real insolvency, and who I believe brought himself into it by his own great imprudence, sent me by my Printer a black letter Chaucer of the first edition, and an original picture of the poet Drayton; for the book he asked one guinea, for the picture five. As I make no curious collections, either of books or of pictures, neither of these offers were accepted by me, as charity was out of the case, for his debts are too large and his imprudence too great to make him an object of it. He has *de quoi vivre*, and added thousands would only make him more improvident; this I only speak from the character I have heard of him, for he is not of my acquaintance.

However, as the picture is certainly an original, I think it worth while to describe it to you, as you may perhaps be either willing to purchase it, or to mention it to some of your friends.

It is on board, about the Holbein size of a head, that is something less than life, the drapery black, with a cloak on the left shoulder, a broad ruff, and a laurel crown, the date, Ætat. suæ 36 anno 1599, which, on consulting Grainger, I found answered

2080. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 7, 1781.

YESTERDAY, Sir, I received the favour of your letter with the inclosed prologue,[1] and am extremely pleased with it; not only as it omits mention of me, for which I give you my warmest thanks, but as a composition. The thoughts are just and happily expressed; and the conclusion is so lively and well conceived, that Mr. Harris, to whom I carried it this morning, thinks it will have great effect. We are very sorry you have not sent us an epilogue too; but, before I touch on that, I will be more regular in my details. Miss Younge has accepted the part very gracefully; and by a letter I have received from her, in answer to mine, will, I flatter myself, take care to do justice to it. Nay, she is so zealous, that Mr. Harris tells me she has taken great pains with the young person who is to play the daughter, but whose name I cannot at this moment recollect.[2]

I must now confess that I have been again alarmed. I had a message from Mr. Harris on Saturday last to tell me that the performers had been so alert, and were so ready with their parts, and the many disappointments that had happened this season had been so prejudicial to him, that it would be easy and necessary to bring out your play next Saturday the 10th, and desired to have the prologue and epilogue. This precipitation made me apprehend that

exactly to his time of life, though not to the date of his print, which was taken from a picture drawn when he was older. It is a sensible countenance and in good drawing, but with little shadow, consequently flat though highly finished. It is in good preservation except a blister or two on the nose, which Beckwith our picture-cleaner here says he could easily cure. He offers to repair the whole for half-a-guinea, and as he is not only a very good picture-cleaner but also a great antiquarian, I am certain he would execute his task *con amore*, or rather with all the care and faithful solicitude of Antiquarianility, which as it is a word of my own coining, and has before had your approbation, I hope I may use without being accused of tautology. If this account of the picture induces you or any of your acquaintance to become its purchaser, I shall take care that it be be sent to you with all possible punctuality; for I have a sort of veneration for the old Laureate, though rather for Selden's sake than his own; because I remember that the lawyer's notes on his 'Poliolbion' helped me to much record erudition concerning Druidism, when I was writing 'Caractacus.'

I have (God be thanked) got one quarter's Residence almost over, and begin another next Sunday; if I get well through it, I shall then be my own man for a year and three quarters. In hopes of hearing from you soon, I slumber in my stall, and with a very dignified yawn conclude myself very faithfully and respectfully yours,

W. MASON.

[1] To the tragedy of the 'Count of Narbonne.'—WRIGHT.

[2] Miss Satchell.—WRIGHT.

justice would not be done to your tragedy. Still I did not dare to remonstrate; nor would venture to damp an ardour which I could not expect to excite again. Instead of objecting to his haste, I only said I had not received your prologue and epilogue, but had written for them and expected them every minute, though, as it depended on winds, one could never be sure. I trusted to accidents for delay; at least I thought I could contrive some, without seeming to combat what he thought for his interest.

I have not been mistaken. On receiving your prologue yesterday, I came to town to-day and carried it to him, to show him I lost no time. He told me Mr. Henderson was not enough recovered, but he hoped would be well enough to bring out the play on Saturday se'nnight; that he had had a rough rehearsal yesterday morning, with which he had been charmed; and was persuaded, and that the performers think so too, that your play will have great effect. All this made me very easy. There is to be a regular rehearsal on Saturday, for which I shall stay in town on purpose; and, if I find the performers perfect, I think there will be no objection to its appearance on Saturday se'nnight. I shall rather prefer that day to a later; as, the Parliament not being met, it will have a week's run before politics interfere.

Now, Sir, for the epilogue. I have taken the liberty of desiring Mr. Harris to have one prepared, in case yours should not arrive in time. It is a compliment to him, (I do not mean that he will write it himself,) will interest him still more in the cause; and, though he may not procure a very good one, a manager may know better than we do what will suit the taste of the times. The success of a play being previous, cannot be hurt by an epilogue, though some plays have been saved; and if it be not a good one, it will not affect you. If you send us a good one, though too late, it may be printed with the play.

I must act about the impression just the reverse of what I did about the performance, and must beg you would commission some friend to transact that affair; for I know nothing of the terms, and should probably disserve you if I undertook the treaty with the booksellers, nor should I have time to supervise the correction of the press. In truth, it is so disagreeable a business, that I doubt I have given proofs at my own press of being too negligent; and as I am actually at present reprinting my 'Anecdotes of Painting,' I have but too much business of that sort on my hands. You will forgive my saying this, especially when you consider that my hands

are very lame, and that this morning in Mr. Harris's room, the right one shook so, that I was forced to desire him to write a memorandum for me.

I think I have omitted nothing material. Mr. Wroughton is to play the 'Count.' I do not know who will speak the prologue; probably not Mr. Henderson, as he has been so very ill: nor should I be very earnest for it; for the 'Friar's' is so capital and so laborious a part, that I should not wish to abate his powers by any previous exertion. Perhaps I refine too much, but I own I think the non-appearance of a principal actor till his part opens is an advantage.

I will only add that I must beg you will not talk of obligations to me. You have at least overpaid me *d'avance* by the honour you have done me in adopting the 'Castle of Otranto.'

2081. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 10, 1781.

As I have been at the rehearsal of your tragedy to-day, Sir, I must give you a short account of it; though I am little able to write, having a good deal of gout in my right hand, which would have kept me away from anything else, and made me hurry back hither the moment it was over, lest I should be confined to town. Mr. Malone, perhaps, who was at the play-house too, may have anticipated me; for I could not save the post to-night, nor will this go till to-morrow.

Mr. Henderson is still too ill to attend, but hopes to be abroad by Tuesday: Mr. Hull read his part very well. Miss Younge[1] is perfectly mistress of her part, is pleased with it, and I think will do it justice. I never saw her play so ably. Miss Satchell, who is to play 'Adelaide,' is exactly what she should be: very young, pretty enough, natural and simple. She has already acted 'Juliet' with success. Her voice is not only pleasing, but very audible; and, which is much more rare, very articulate: she does not gabble, as most young women do, even off the stage. Mr. Wroughton much exceeded my expectation. He enters warmly into his part, and with thorough zeal. Mr. Lewis was so very imperfect in his part, that I cannot judge quite what he will do, for he could not repeat

[1] Miss Younge, afterwards Mrs. Pope. She died in 1797.—Cunningham.

two lines by heart; but he looked haughtily, and as he pleased me in 'Percy,' which is the same kind of character, I promise myself he will succeed in this.

Very, very few lines will be omitted; and there will be one or two verbal alterations to accommodate the disposition, but which will not appear in the printed copies, of which Mr. Malone says he will take the management. As Mr. Harris and the players all seemed zealous and in good humour, I would not contest some trifles; and, indeed, they were not at all unreasonable. I am to see the scenes on Friday, if I am able; and if Mr. Henderson is well enough, the play will be performed on the 17th or immediately after. Some slight delays, which one cannot foresee, may always happen. In truth, I little expected so much readiness and compliance both in manager and actors; nor, from all I have heard of the stage, could conceive such facilities. From the moment Mr. Harris consented to perform your play, there has not been one instance of obstinacy or wrongheadedness anywhere. If the audience is as reasonable and just, you may, Sir, promise yourself complete success.

2082. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 13, 1781.

I HAVE this minute, Sir, received the corrected copy of your tragedy, which is almost all I am able to say, for I have so much gout in this hand, and it shakes so much, that I am scarce able to manage my pen. I will go to town if I can, and consult Mr. Henderson on the alterations; though I confess I think it dangerous to propose them so late before representation, which the papers say again is to be on Saturday if Mr. Henderson is well enough. Mr. Malone shall have the corrected copy for impression.

I own I cannot suspect that Mr. Sheridan will employ any ungenerous arts against your play. I have never heard anything to give me suspicions of his behaving unhandsomely; and as you indulge my zeal and age a liberty of speaking like a friend, I would beg you to suppress your sense of the too great prerogatives of theatric monarchs. I hope you will again and again have occasion to court the power of their crowns; and therefore, if not for your own, for the sake of the public do not declare war with them. It has not been my practice to preach slavery; but, while one deals with and

depends on mimic sovereigns, I would *act* policy, especially when by temporary passive obedience one can really lay a lasting obligation on one's country, which your plays really are.

I am glad you approve what I had previously undertaken, Mr. Harris's procuring an epilogue; he told me on Saturday that he should have one. You are very happy in friends, Sir; which is another proof of your merit. Mr. Malone is not less zealous than Mr. Tighe, to whom I beg my compliments.

2083. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 13, 1781.

I TRY to answer your letter though my hand shakes so it is very difficult. I have had the gout in my right these three months; the fourth finger has discharged a shower of chalk-stones which makes me as a genealogist, no otherwise I protest to your priesthood, conclude that I am descended from Deucalion rather than Adam, unless there has been any intermarriage between the two families. A new swelling has come within this week and must be lanced soon, and being very nervous too, any effort in writing makes my hand reel more, but I must thank you for your *Primierà* about the picture of Drayton, though I do not choose to purchase it. I have no room to stick a single head; I am poor, too, and am grown so old that every acquisition seems much dearer to me from the little time I have to enjoy it. Shall I own farther? I do not think all Drayton ever wrote worth five guineas; Dr. Johnson perhaps may have installed him in Milton's throne, and the age may have sworn fealty to him; but I am a Tory, and adhere to the right line, and will not abjure those I learnt to revere in my nursery, nor will kneel to stocks and stones that the mob are taught to idolise.

I am, too, though a Goth, so modern a Goth that I hate the black letter, and I love Chaucer better in Dryden and Baskerville, than in his own language and dress; still my Antiquarianility is much obliged to your pimping for it, but the anility-half predominates and will not pay for such a spark as Drayton, who is neither young nor vigorous.

Though very unfit for anything at present, and when I say at *present* do not imagine I expect to grow fitter for anything, I am occupied about Mr. Jephson's play, have been at one rehearsal, and must, if I can, be at another on Friday. The players, I believe,

thought I was come to act the ghost of the miscarriage in 'The What-d'ye-call-it;' perhaps it may prove so by venturing with the gout into a cold theatre, and then I shall say to them with propriety, "I owe my death to you! to you! to you!" I could entertain you, were my hand able, with the history of my negotiations with Mr. Harris, Miss Younge, and how all my finesse was nearly *deroutée* by an Irish head, but I am tired, and must wish you good night.

2084. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 15, 1781.

I DON'T know whether I shall be able to go through a letter, Madam, for I have a new swelling on one of my fingers, which must be lanced, and my hand trembles so much that I often cannot write a line. In this uneasy situation I am again come to town to attend a rehearsal. This play, I confess, plagues me a good deal, for our lord's ecliptic countrymen undo as fast as I do. The manager was going to hurry on the performance last Saturday, before actors, scenes, or anything was ripe. I trusted to accidents and bore that haste. I had no sooner done so, than one of your Milesians took fire and wrote an angry letter to Mr. Harris, in resentment of the precipitation. Well! that quarrel I made up. To-day, after I had begged Mr. Harris to procure an epilogue, and he had got one, Mr. Jephson had written to this Mr. O'Quarrel, who is a poet too, to write one, and so he has; and now, on Thursday night, with the play to come forth on Saturday, we don't know which is to be preferred. I am to be at the theatre to-morrow by eleven, and Lord knows what will happen! I will tire your Ladyship no more with my grievances, but will take care how I promise and vow for a play again. I want to be quiet in my own Strawberry again—indeed I am fit to be no where else, and have a great mind to fix there.

I heard a great deal of French news t'other day by one just come from Paris. I don't answer for one syllable being true. My historian says the Queen seemed to be resolved, *à la Marie d'Este*, that her babe should be a dauphin. Her reckoning and her person shifted back wards and forwards, and the last time having put off her delivery for a fortnight, and sent the King to hunt, he was fetched back in a quarter of an hour to see a son. Then there is a delightful episode of a Mademoiselle Diane de Polignac, a friend of the favourite

Duchess, who was dame to Madame Elizabeth, and who was so very pious, and had so bemethodised her mistress, that they feared the Princess would follow her aunt Louise into a convent, and they would have dismissed the saint, if the Queen would have consented, and if the saint herself had not, one *beau matin*, had the misfortune to have a little one. For fear of any more virgin-mothers, the Queen and the Duchess have produced an old Madame Dandelot, who was exiled in the last reign for having taken a very different way to convert Madame Adelaide, by lending her a strange book, of which I protest I know the name no more than your Ladyship. One anecdote more, and I will not ask my hand to say a word more. The Comte d'Artois carried his eldest boy, the Comte d'Angoulême, to see the dauphin. The child said, "*Il est bien petit.*" The Prince replied, "*Patience, mon enfant, vous le trouverez bien-tôt trop grand.*"

I don't know whether your Ladyship can read all this tittle-tattle; it does not signify if you do not. I know nothing else, nor could write more if I did. Soon, mayhap, I must write upon a slate, it will only be scraping my fingers to a point, and they will serve for a chalk pencil.

Friday.

I have been at the theatre, and compromised the affair of the epilogues; one is to be spoken to-morrow, the Friend's on the author's night. I have been tumbling into trap-doors, seeing dresses tried on in the green-room, and directing armour in the painting-room, and all this with such a throbbing hand that I was tempted to rest myself in Covent-Garden Church-yard, and bilk both the great stage and the little one.

2085. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 18, 1781.

As Mr. Malone undertook to give you an account, Sir, by last night's post, of the great success of your tragedy,[1] I did not hasten home to write; but stayed at the theatre, to talk to Mr. Harris and the actors, and learn what was said, besides the general applause. Indeed I never saw a more unprejudiced audience, nor more attention. There was not the slightest symptom of disapprobation to any

[1] Jephson's tragedy of 'The Count of Narbonne' was produced at Covent-Garden, 17th Nov., 1781, and acted about nineteen times.—CUNNINGHAM.

part, and the plaudit was great and long when given out again for Monday. I mention these circumstances in justification of Mr. Sheridan, to whom I never spoke in my life, but who certainly had not sent a single person to hurt you. The prologue was exceedingly liked; and, for effect, no play ever produced more tears. In the green-room I found that Hortensia's sudden death was the only incident disapproved, as we heard by intelligence from the pit; and it is to be deliberated to-morrow whether it may not be preferable to carry her off as if only in a swoon. When there is only so slight an objection, you cannot doubt of your full success. It is impossible to say how much justice Miss Younge did to your writing. She has shown herself a great mistress of her profession, mistress of dignity, passion, and of all the sentiments you have put into her hands. The applause given to her description of Raymond's death lasted some minutes, and recommenced; and her scene in the fourth act, after the Count's ill-usage, was played in the highest perfection. Mr. Henderson was far better than I expected from his weakness, and from his rehearsal yesterday, with which he was much discontented himself. Mr. Wroughton was very animated, and played the part of the Count much better than any man now on the stage would have done. I wish I could say Mr. Lewis satisfied me; and that poor child Miss Satchell was very inferior to what she appeared at the rehearsals, where the total silence and our nearness deceived us. Her voice has no strength, nor is she yet at all mistress of the stage. I have begged Miss Younge to try what she can do with her by Monday. However, there is no danger to your play: it is fully established. I confess I am not only pleased on your account, Sir, but on Mr. Harris's, as he has been so very obliging to me. I am not likely to have any more intercourse with the stage; but I shall be happy if I leave my interlude there by settling an amity between you and Mr. Harris, whence I hope he will draw profit and you more renown.

2086. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley Square, Sunday morning, Nov. 18, 1781.

I HAVE been here again for three days, tending and nursing and waiting on Mr. Jephson's play. I have brought it into the world, was well delivered of it, it can stand on its own legs—and I am going back to my own quiet hill, never likely to have anything more to do

with theatres. Indeed it has seemed strange to me, who for these three or four years have not been so many times in a play-house, nor knew six of the actors by sight, to be at two rehearsals, behind the scenes, in the green-room, and acquainted with half the company. The 'Count of Narbonne' was played last night with great applause, and without a single murmur of disapprobation. Miss Younge has charmed me. She played with intelligence that was quite surprising. The applause to one of her speeches lasted a minute, and recommenced twice before the play could go on. I am sure you will be pleased with the conduct and the easy beautiful language of the play, and struck with her acting.

2087. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 21, 1781.

I HAVE just received your two letters, Sir, and the epilogue, which I am sorry came so late, as there are very pretty things in it: but I believe it would be very improper to produce it now, as the two others have been spoken.

I am sorry you are discontent with there being no standing figure of Alphonso, and that I acquiesced in its being cumbent. I did certainly yield, and I think my reasons will justify me. In the first place, you seemed to have made a distinction between the statue and the tomb; and had both been represented, they would have made a confusion. But a more urgent reason for my compliance was the shortness of the time, which did not allow the preparation of an entire new scene, as I proposed last year and this, nay, and mentioned it to Mr. Harris. When I came to the house to see the scene prepared, it was utterly impossible to adjust an erect figure to it; nor, indeed, do I conceive, were the scene disposed as you recommend, how Adelaide could be stabbed behind the scenes. As I never disguise the truth, I must own,—for I did think myself so much obliged to Mr. Harris,—that I was unwilling to heap difficulties on him, when I did not think they would hurt your piece. I fortunately was not mistaken: the entrance of Adelaide wounded had the utmost effect, and I believe much greater than would have resulted from her being stabbed on the stage. In short, the success has been so complete, and both your poetry and the conduct of the tragedy are so much and so justly admired, that I flatter myself you will not blame me for what has not produced the smallest inconvenience.

Both the manager and the actors were tractable, I believe, beyond example; and it is my nature to bear some contradiction, when it will carry material points. The very morning, the only morning I had to settle the disposition, I had another difficulty to reconcile,—the competition of the two epilogues, which I was so lucky as to compromise too. I will say nothing of my being three hours each time, on two several days, in a cold theatre with the gout on me; and perhaps it was too natural to give up a few points in order to get home, for which I ask your pardon. Yet the event shows that I have not injured you; and if I was in one instance impatient, I flatter myself that my solicitations to Mr. Harris and Miss Younge, and the zeal I have shown to serve you, will atone for my having in one moment thought of myself, and then only when the reasons that weighed with me were so plausible, that without a totally new scene which the time would not allow, I do not see how they could have been obviated. Your tragedy, Sir, has taken such a rank upon the stage, that one may reasonably hope it will hereafter be represented with all the decorations to your mind; and I admire it so truly, that I shall be glad to have it conducted by an abler mechanist than your obedient humble servant.

2088. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 22, 1781.

I AM angry with myself, Madam, for having dropped a word that gave you any concern; nor shall I forgive my guilty self, though it has produced such new proof of your Ladyship's goodness. I have not suffered at all by my campaign at the theatre, but *like weeds that escape the scythe*, I do not catch cold where a giant would. It is true I am so nervous, that the least surprise or sudden noise agitates me from head to foot; but I will not say a word more on my debility. An aspen leaf can give an oak no idea of its sensations —and why should it? I have such a dread of seeming not to be apprised of my antiquity and decay, that very likely I carry it to affectation, for it is difficult to keep to the medium of simplicity and common sense, on any occasion. Having therefore put in my caveat against being suspected of any imaginary robustness, you shall hear no more of any cracks that happened to the premises.

After all my pains Mr. Jephson is not quite satisfied. Though I had begged him (and he had promised) not to communicate to his

Irish friends the approaching exhibition of his tragedy, he had, as I told your Ladyship, written to one of them here, who, as I told you too, quarrelled with Mr. Harris, and then, I believe, with me, about his epilogue. To punish me, he wrote to Mr. Jephson that I had given up a material point of the decoration of the last scene, and had consented that the statue of Alphonso should be cumbent, though Mr. Jephson had called it *standing*—which, by the way, was wrong. The truth was, we had not time to remedy that contradiction, unless by altering the word, which Mr. Friend would not allow, nor could we have placed an erect statue in the scene prepared—and if we could, it would have spoiled the great effect of the last scene. In short, Mr. Jephson has written me a pressing letter to amend that disposition, when it is too late. Well! I am content with having brought so beautiful a play on the stage; and, as it is never too late to learn, I will take care how I undertake such an office another time.

My sage nephew, Lord Orford, is, I hear, drawing up a code of laws—for coursing; for the use of her Imperial Majesty of Russia—a fitter code, indeed, for a despot, than a general system of legislation. I hope Diderot and D'Alembert will celebrate her humanity in not allowing poor hares to be hunted to death, but according to law. You see, Madam, she has sent her son to travel; shall you be prodigiously surprised if he was to die suddenly by eating ice when he was over-heated?

2089. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 26, 1781.

Your letter of the 10th, which I have received to-night, has been very cordial to me, as Mrs. Noel and I have been very uneasy at not seeing your nephew, who used to have the two qualities of punctuality and flying; but I see he cannot execute the latter when his wings are wetted. I left Twickenham this morning; but, though the Duchess of Montrose and Mrs. Noel are to come to town on Wednesday, I shall send a line to the latter, to let her know the accidents your nephew experienced at setting out.

I am delighted that Mrs. Damer and you are delighted with each other. I know it mutually, for Lady Aylesbury received a letter this evening from Lady William Campbell, who told her so. Thank you a million of times for your kindness to them. If you have time

to know Mrs. Damer, what will you not think of her? But I must turn to a subject that will not be so pleasing to you.

An account came yesterday that could not but be expected, that Washington and the French have made Lord Cornwallis and his whole army prisoners. I do not know what others think, but to me it seems fortunate that they were not all cut to pieces. It is not heroic perhaps, but I am glad, that this disaster arriving before our fleet reached the Chesapeak, it turned back to New York without attacking the French fleet, who are above three to two, thirty-seven to twenty-three. This is all I know yet; and yet this comes at an untoward moment; for the Parliament meets to-morrow, and it puts the Speech and speeches a little into disorder.

I cannot put on the face of the day, and act grief. Whatever puts an end to the American war will save the lives of thousands—millions of money too. If glory compensates such sacrifices, I never heard that disgraces and disappointments were palliatives; but I will not descant, nor is it right to vaunt of having been in the right when one's country's shame is the solution of one's prophecy, nor would one join in the triumph of her enemies. Details you will hear from France sooner than I can send them; but I will write again the moment I know anything material. I am sorry your nephew is not arrived; who, by being in Parliament and in the world, would be sooner and better informed than I, who stir little out of my own house, and have no political connections, nor scarce a wish but to die in peace.

2090. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 26, 1781, *late at night.*

I CAME to town to-day at two o'clock, and found the town in a hubbub on the news of Lord Cornwallis and his whole army being made prisoners; but the Speech and two majorities to-morrow will send them all easy again to the opera by night.

I cannot tell you a word more of this mishap than Mr. Stonhewer has told you, whom I met this evening at Lady Cecilia's, and who has written to you. Mr. Macpherson, who publishes our daily creed, has been proclaiming that Lord Cornwallis has vowed he would never pile up his arms like Burgoyne. I do not know whether this was to keep up our spirits or not, but it puts the hero in a ridiculous light, which is the way in which heroes are treated of late, when they can be no longer of use; it saves rewards.

I have heard nothing else, nor was this repetition worth sending, but it proves I am not negligent.

I have been plagued about Mr. Jephson's play—nay, I am so still, for though I did prevail on Mr. Harris to act it, who had been ill used about it, and on Miss Younge to play the mother, which she has done to admiration; and though it has succeeded perfectly, the author is dissatisfied. I had four sides last week, and to-night another letter of eight pages to scold me for letting the statue on the tomb be cumbent instead of erect. In short, I do not wonder he is a poet, for he is distracted: he shall act his next play himself for me.

When you come to town I can show you a thousand curious things, from Madame du Deffand's papers, but I believe I did mention them before. When one repeats oneself, it is plain one grows old, or has nothing to say.

2091. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 27, 1781.

Each fresh mark of your Lordship's kindness and friendship calls on me for thanks and an answer: every other reason would enjoin me silence. I not only grow so old, but the symptoms of age increase so fast, that, as they advise me to keep out of the world, that retirement makes me less fit to be informing or entertaining. The philosophers who have sported on the verge of the tomb, or they who have *affected* to sport in the same situation, both tacitly implied that it was not out of their thoughts; and however dear what we are going to leave may be, all that is not particularly dear must cease to interest us much. If those reflections blend themselves with our gayest thoughts, must not their hue grow more dusky when public misfortunes and disgrace cast a general shade?[1] The age, it is true, soon emerges out of every gloom, and wantons as before. But does not that levity imprint a still deeper melancholy on those who do think? Have any of our calamities corrected us? Are we not revelling on the brink of the precipice? Does administration grow more sage, or desire that we should grow more sober? Are these themes for letters, my dear Lord? Can one repeat common

[1] The fatal intelligence of the surrender of the British forces at York-town, under the command of Lord Cornwallis, to the combined armies of America and France, under General Washington, had reached England on the 25th.—Wright.

news with indifference, while our shame is writing for future history by the pens of all our numerous enemies? When did England see two whole armies lay down their arms and surrender themselves prisoners? Can venal addresses efface such stigmas, that will be recorded in every country in Europe? Or will such disgraces have no consequences? Is not America lost to us? Shall we offer up more human victims to the demon of obstinacy; and shall we tax ourselves deeper to furnish out the sacrifice? These are thoughts I cannot stifle at the moment that enforces them; and though I do not doubt but the same spirit of dissipation that has swallowed up all our principles will reign again in three days with its wonted sovereignty, I had rather be silent than vent my indignation.—Yet I cannot talk, for I cannot think, on any other subject. It was not six days ago, that in the height of four raging wars I saw in the papers an account of the Opera and of the dresses of the company; and thence the town, and thence of course the whole nation, were informed that Mr. Fitzpatrick had very little powder in his hair.[1]

Would not one think that our newspapers were penned by boys just come from school for the information of their sisters and cousins? Had we had 'Gazettes' and 'Morning Posts' in those days, would they have been filled with such tittle-tattle after the battle of Agincourt, or in the more resembling weeks after the battle of Naseby? Did the French trifle equally even during the ridiculous war of the Fronde? If they were as impertinent then, at least they had wit in their levity. We are monkeys in conduct, and as clumsy as bears

[1] The following picture of fashionable life at the time of Walpole's lament, is by Mr. Wilberforce:—"When I left the University, so little did I know of general society, that I came up to London stored with arguments to prove the authenticity of Rowley's Poems; and now I was at once immersed in politics and fashion. The very first time I went to Boodle's, I won twenty-five guineas of the Duke of Norfolk. I belonged at this time to five clubs—Miles and Evans's, Brookes's, Boodle's, White's, Goostree's. The first time I was at Brookes's, scarcely knowing any one, I joined, from mere shyness, in play at the faro-table, where George Selwyn kept bank. A friend, who knew my inexperience, and regarded me as a victim decked out for sacrifice, called to me, 'What, Wilberforce! is that you?' Selwyn quite resented the interference; and, turning to him, said, in his most expressive tone, 'O, sir, don't interrupt Mr. Wilberforce; he could not be better employed!' Nothing could be more luxurious than the style of these clubs. Fox, Sheridan, Fitzpatrick, and all your leading men, frequented them, and associated upon the easiest terms; you chatted, played at cards, or gambled, as you pleased. I was one of those who met to spend an evening in memory of Shakspeare, at the Boar's-head, Eastcheap. Many professed wits were present, but Pitt was the most amusing of the party. We played a good deal at Goostree's; and I well remember the intense earnestness which he displayed when joining in those games of chance. He perceived their increasing fascination, and soon after suddenly abandoned them for ever." *Life*, vol. i. p. 16.—WRIGHT.

when we try to gambol. Oh! my Lord! I have no patience with my country! and shall leave it without regret!—Can we be proud when all Europe scorns us? It was wont to envy us, sometimes to hate us, but never despised us before. James the First was contemptible, but he did not lose an America! His eldest grandson sold us, his younger lost us—but we kept ourselves. Now we have run to meet the ruin—and it is coming!

I beg your Lordship's pardon if I have said too much—but I do not believe I have. You have never sold yourself, and therefore have not been accessory to our destruction. You must be happy *now* not to have a son, who would live to grovel in the dregs of England. Your Lordship has long been so wise as to secede from the follies of your countrymen. May you and Lady Strafford long enjoy the tranquillity that has been your option even in better days!—and may you amuse yourself without giving loose to such reflections as have overflowed in this letter from your devoted humble servant!

2092. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Nov. 28, 1781.

You may be unused to horrors, yet if you have read the 10th article of Lord Cornwallis's capitulation, your feelings will bleed afresh. He capitulates for his own person and return; he capitulates for his garrison; but lest the loyal Americans who had followed him should be included in that indemnity, he demands that they should not be *punished*—is refused—and leaves them to be hanged! Now his burning towns, &c., becomes a mere wantonness of war: they were the towns of those whom he calls rebels, though he was one of five who protested against the Stamp Act—but these were his friends, his fellow-soldiers! Could I fill three pages more with news I would not—what article could deserve to be coupled with so abominable a deed!

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, Dec. 16, 1781.

I OMITTED one topic for a letter till it was out of date: I should have congratulated you on the success of your son Jephson's tragedy, to which filiation you had certainly as good a claim as Homer had to either of his dramatic bantlings Sophocles and Euripides; but while I was framing a fine period for the purpose, a letter from you stops me, by telling me that he is in his Lunes. However, I have a topic on my table

2093. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Nov. 29, 1781.

Your nephew is arrived, as he has told you himself; the sight of him, for he called on me the next morning, was more than ordinarily welcome, though your letter of the 10th, which I received the night before, had dispelled many of my fears. I will now unfold them to you. A packet-boat from Ostend was lost last week, and your nephew was named for one of the passengers. As Mrs. Noel had expected him for a fortnight, I own my apprehensions were strengthened; but I will say no more on a dissipated panic. However, this incident and his half-wreck at Lerici will, I hope, prevent him for the future from staying with you so late in the year; and I see by your letter that you agree with me, of which I should be sure though you had not said so.

I mentioned on Tuesday the captivity of Lord Cornwallis and his army, the Columbus who was to bestow America on us again. A second army taken in a drag-net is an uncommon event, and happened but once to the Romans, who sought adventures everywhere. We have not lowered our tone on this new disgrace, though I think

which shall not be lost, comprised in two octavo volumes, which might, I think justly be entitled Learning in its Lunes, or the Etymologist run mad. I never in my days saw such a farrago of inconclusive quotation. You I suppose will wonder that I have read it, and reserving yourself for that huger phenomenon of antiquarianility which is shortly to obfuscate the literary hemisphere, will say proudly as Bishop Dawes did to a lady who asked him if he had seen a late eclipse of the moon; "No, madam, but my chaplain did; I saw the eclipse of the sun." I, however, have paid due attention to this forerunner of dulness, and with pen in hand have marginally noted him almost throughout, and if I live to finish the work am not without my hopes that my copy may one day stand on the same shelf with some of the like scribblings of yours and Gray's pen inserted on the margin of some such like author; a prophecy of my own full as likely to come to pass as that of Pope's who predicted that Bolingbroke's metaphysics would be placed cheek by jowl between Locke and Malbranche.

As to your political *notitiæ* with which you sometimes favour me, I can only thank you for them. I can send you nothing in return; for what signifies telling you that our county is tending towards a meeting, as some of the southern counties are doing what good will all the county meetings of all England do against that decided spirit of national ruin which now so successfully operates in all our councils? All is over, completely over; so if you won't read Mr. Bryant, read the Dean of Exeter; pick their musty straws of learning, and try to kill time and drive away thought—'tis the best receipt I can give you or myself, except large draughts of Brunswick mum, strong beer, or metheglin? So no more at present from

Your hopeless servant,

W. M.

we shall talk no more of insisting on *implicit submission*, which would rather be a gasconade than firmness. In fact, there is one very unlucky circumstance already come out, which must drive every American, to a man, from ever calling himself our friend. By the tenth article of the capitulation, Lord Cornwallis demanded that the loyal Americans in his army should not be punished. This was flatly refused, and he has left them to be hanged. I doubt no vote of Parliament will be able to blanch such a—such a—I don't know what the word is for it; he must get his uncle the Archbishop to christen it; there is no name for it in any Pagan vocabulary. I suppose it will have a patent for being called Necessity. Well! there ends another volume of the American war. It looks a little as if the history of it would be all we should have for it, except forty millions of debt, and three other wars that have grown out of it, and that do not seem so near to a conclusion. They say that Monsieur de Maurepas, who is dying, being told that the Duc de Lauzun had brought the news of Lord Cornwallis's surrender, said, from Racine's 'Mithridate' I think:—

Mes derniers regards ont vu fuir les Romains.

How Lord Chatham will frown when they meet! for, since I began my letter, the papers say that Maurepas is dead. The Duc de Nivernois, it is said, is likely to succeed him as Minister; which is probable, as they were brothers-in-law and friends, and the one would naturally recommend the other. Perhaps, not for long, as the Queen's influence gains ground.

The warmth in the House of Commons is prodigiously rekindled; but Lord Cornwallis's fate has cost the Administration no ground *there*. The names of most *éclat* in the Opposition are two names to which those walls have been much accustomed at the same period—Charles Fox and William Pitt, second son of Lord Chatham. Eloquence is the only one of our brilliant qualities that does not seem to have degenerated rapidly—but I shall leave debates to your nephew, now an ear-witness: I could only re-echo newspapers. Is it not another odd coincidence of events, that while the father Laurens is prisoner to Lord Cornwallis as Constable of the Tower, the son Laurens signed the capitulation by which Lord Cornwallis became prisoner? It is said too, I don't know if truly, that this capitulation and that of Saratoga were signed on the same anniversary. These are certainly the speculations of an idle man, and

the more trifling when one considers the moment. But alas! what would *my* most grave speculations avail? From the hour that fatal egg, the Stamp Act, was laid, I disliked it and all the vipers hatched from it. I now hear many curse it, who fed the vermin with poisonous weeds. Yet the guilty and the innocent rue it equally hitherto! I would not answer for what is to come! Seven years of miscarriages may sour the sweetest tempers, and the most sweetened. Oh! where is the Dove with the olive-branch? Long ago I told you that you and I might not live to see an end of the American war. It is very near its end indeed now—its consequences are far from a conclusion. In some respects, they are commencing a new date, which will reach far beyond *us*. I desire not to pry into that book of futurity. Could I finish my course in peace—but one must take the chequered scenes of life as they come. What signifies whether the elements are serene or turbulent, when a private old man slips away? What has he and the world's concerns to do with one another? He may sigh for his country, and babble about it; but he might as well sit quiet and read or tell old stories; the past is as important to him as the future.

Dec. 3.

I had not sealed my letter, as it cannot set out till to-morrow; and since I wrote it I have received yours, of the 20th of November, by your courier.

I congratulate you on the success of your attempts, and admire the heroic refusal of the General.[1] I shall certainly obey you, and not mention it. Indeed, it would not easily be believed here, where as many pence are irresistible.

Your nephew told me that Mrs. Damer was hasting to Rome. I am glad that, as far as you could in so short a time, you did not find that I had exaggerated; but I know her shyness too well not to be sure that you could not discover a thousandth part of her understanding.

Your Mr. Terney was an ostentatious fool, of whom there is no more to be said. Formerly, when such simpletons did not know what to do with their wealth, they bequeathed it to the Church; and then, perhaps, one got a good picture for an altar, or a painted window.

[1] General [the Hon. James] Murray [died 1794], governor of Minorca, which was besieged by the Spaniards, was offered a vast bribe by the Duc de Crillon, the Spanish commander, to give up Port St. Philip, but spurned at the offer.—WALPOLE.

Don't trouble yourself about the third set of 'Galuzzi.' They are to be had here now, and those for whom I intended them can buy them. I have not made so much progress as I intended, and have not yet quite finished the second volume. I detest Cosmo the Great. I am sorry, either that he was so able a man, or so successful a man. When tyrants are great men they should miscarry; if they are fools, they will miscarry of course. Pray, is there any picture of Camilla Martelli, Cosmo's last wife? I had never heard of her. The dolt, his son, I find used her ill, and then did the same thing. Our friend, Bianca Capello, it seems, was a worthless creature. I don't expect much entertainment but from the Life of Ferdinand the Great. It is true I have dipped into the others, particularly into the story of Cosmo the Third's wife, of whom I had read much in French Mémoires, and into that of John Gaston, which was so fresh when I was at Florence; but as the author, in spite of the Great-Duke's injunctions, has tried to palliate some of the worst imputations on Cosmo and his son Ferdinand, so he has been mighty modest about the Caprean amours of John Gaston and his elder brother. Adieu! I have been writing a volume here myself. Pray remember to answer me about Camilla Martelli.

P.S. Is there any china left in the Great-Duke's collection, made by Duke Francis the First himself? Perhaps it was lately sold with what was called the refuse of the wardrobe, whence I hear some charming things were purchased, particularly the Medallions[1] of the Medici, by Benvenuto Cellini. That sale and the 'History' are enough to make the old Electress[2] shudder in her coffin.

2094. TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 1, 1781.

I AM truly sensible of, and grateful for, your Lordship's benevolent remembrance of me, and shall receive with great respect and pleasure the collection your Lordship has been pleased to order to be sent to me. I must admire too, my Lord, the generous assistance that you have lent to your adopted children; but more forcibly than all

[1] They were only small models in wax, and were purchased by Sir William Hamilton.—WALPOLE.

[2] The Electress Palatine Dowager, sister of John Gaston, the last Great-Duke of the House of Medici, whom she survived, returned to Florence on her husband's death, and died there.—WALPOLE.

I feel your pathetic expressions on the distress of the public, which is visible even in this extravagant and thoughtless city. The number of houses to be let in every street, whoever runs may read.

At the time of your writing your letter, your Lordship did not know the accumulation of misfortune and disgrace that has fallen on us;[1] nor should I wish to be the trumpeter of my country's calamities. Yet as they must float on the surface of the mind, and blend their hue with all its emanations, they suggest this reflection, that there can be no time so proper for the institution of inquiries into past story as the moment of the fall of an empire,—a nation becomes a theme for antiquaries, when it ceases to be one for an historian!—and while its ruins are fresh and in legible preservation.

I congratulate your Lordship on the discovery of the Scottish monarch's portrait in Suabia, and am sorry you did not happen to specify of which; but I cannot think of troubling your Lordship to write again on purpose; I may probably find it mentioned in some of the papers I shall receive.

There is one passage in your Lordship's letter in which I cannot presume to think myself included; and yet if I could suppose I was, it would look like most impertinent neglect, and unworthiness of the honour that your Lordship and the society have done me, if I did not at least offer very humbly to obey it. You are pleased to say, my Lord, that the members, when authors, have agreed to give copies of such of their works as any way relate to the objects of the institution. Amongst my very trifling publications, I think there are none that can pretend even remotely to that distinction, but the 'Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors,' and the 'Anecdotes of Painting,' in each of which are Scottish authors or artists. If these should be thought worthy of a corner on any shelf of the Society's library, I should be proud of sending, at your Lordship's command, the original edition of the first. Of the latter I have not a single set left but my own. But I am printing a new edition in octavo, with many additions and corrections, though without cuts, as the former edition was too dear for many artists to purchase. The new I will send when finished, if I could hope it would be acceptable, and your Lordship would please to tell me by what channel.

I am ashamed, my Lord, to have said so much, or anything relating to myself. I ask your pardon too for the slovenly writing

[1] The surrender of the British army at York-town.—WRIGHT.

of my letter; but my hand is both lame and shaking, and I should but write worse if I attempted transcribing.

I have the honour to be, &c

P.S. It has this moment started into my mind, my Lord, that I have heard that at the old castle at Aubigny, belonging and adjoining to the Duke of Richmond's house, there are historic paintings or portraits of the ancient house of Lennox. I recollect too that Father Gordon, superior of the Scots College at Paris, showed me a whole-length of Queen Mary, young, and which he believed was painted while she was Queen of France. He showed me too the original letter she wrote the night before her execution, some deeds of Scottish kings, and one of King (I think Robert) Bruce, remarkable for having no seal appendent, which, Father Gordon said, was executed in the time of his so great distress, that he was not possessed of a seal. I shall be happy if these hints lead to any investigation of use.

2095. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 3, 1781.

I HAVE not only a trembling hand, but scarce time to save the post; yet I write a few lines to beg you will be perfectly easy on my account, who never differ seriously with my friends, when I know they do not mean ill to me. I was sorry you took so much to heart an alteration in the scenery of your play, which did not seem to me very material; and which, having since been adjusted to your wish, had no better effect. I told you that it was my fault, not Mr. Malone's, who is warmly your friend; and I am sure you will be sorry if you do him injustice. I regret no pains I have taken, since they have been crowned with your success; and it would be idle in either of us to recall any little cross circumstance that may have happened, (as always do in bringing a play on the stage,) when they have not prevented its appearance or good fortune. Be assured, Sir, if that is worth knowing, that I have taken no offence, and have all the same good wishes for you that I ever had since I was acquainted with your merit and abilities. I can easily allow for the anxiety of a parent of your genius for his favourite offspring; and though I have not your parts, I have had the warmth, though age and illness have chilled it: but, thank God! they have not

deprived me of my good-humour, and I am most good-humouredly and sincerely your obedient humble servant.

2096. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Tuesday noon, Dec. 18, 1781.

I HEARD our parenthesis of good news too late last night, Madam, to give you an inkling of it; and I doubt whether, if we should receive a complete wreath of sea-flags, I shall have time to send you a leaf to-day, as I am to dine with Princess Amelie, and shall not be dismissed before the post departs. As American liberty is safe, I shall like prodigiously to have crushed a quota of the French navy, and shall love Admiral Kempenfeldt as much as Lord Sandwich himself can. The East Indian triumph is firmly believed. If we only conquer at t'other end of the world, and lose all our nearer possessions, we shall be like a trapes in the Strand, that one sees with short petticoats and a long train. I will keep my letter open till the coach comes to the door, in hopes of a fortunate express, as I have begged Lady Hertford to send me the earliest news.

I was diverted last night at Lady Lucan's. The moment I entered, she set me down to whist with Lady Bute—and who do you think were the other partners? the Archbishopess of Canterbury and Mr. Gibbon. I once saved Lady Suffolk at the Dowager Essex's from playing at the same table with Lady Yarmouth. I saw Lady Suffolk ready to sink, and took her cards from her, saying, "I know your Ladyship hates whist, and I will play instead of you."

If I am too late, should any account come, I conclude Mr. Fitzpatrick will write.

I have been listening impatiently for the Park guns; but it is past two, and they are dumb. I fear their office is almost grown a sinecure, like the Laureate's, who only chants anniversaries, whether glad or sorry!

To divert my impatience, I will tell your Ladyship a story that George Selwyn told us t'other day, after dinner, at Lord Hertford's, and you will allow the authority to be very good. When Mr. de Grey became Baron of Walsingham, he felt that so high a rank, and a title so illustrated, could not consort with Commercial Commissioners, he resigned his seat at the Board of Trade. Lord Carlisle obtained it for Storer, who kissed hands, vacated his seat, and was

re-elected; but, lo! the great Baron of Walsingham cried, "Hold! I am above the place, but till I have another as lucrative, I will not relinquish the salary"—that is, livery and labour degrade; wages for doing nothing, do not; and so poor Storer has already lost four hundred pounds, because a peer blushes to be in the red-book below his rank, but not to take another man's pension who works for it! Do not you like, Madam, to see a grandee hopping with one foot on the *haut du pavé*, and t'other in the kennel, *partie per pale*, ermine and mud! It is just four; I must seal my letter, and go.

2097. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Dec. 19, 1781.

THERE! Madam, there! one cannot for a moment expect success, but one is in a scrape, and involved in disgrace! Runners come forth in swarms, buzz about one's ears, cry Victory! transports taken! an expedition defeated! the West Indies saved! and one is such a driveller as to believe them, and to die with impatience for half a dozen French men-of-war towed into Portsmouth, and as many sunk, with the loss of only a leg or arm to some of one's particular friends; next night comes out a 'Gazette,' and coolly tells you, "Yes, we had taken a few transports, though, somehow or other, we have dropped half a dozen by the way; and as to destroying the enemies' fleet, why, they happened to be an overmatch for us, as they had five little vessels of 110 guns each, which had been concealed behind a mole-hill out of sight of any of our cutters; and so we contented ourselves with our day's sport, and hope you will not be much disappointed." "Well, but what have you done with the West Indies?" "Oh! they will go: but you have got the East Indies in their stead, and, 'sure,' diamonds and gold are preferable to sugar; and had not you rather our gracious Sovereign was great Mogul, than master of two or three islands almost as small as Mecklenberg?" I wish you good night, Madam; I have done with politics, they make me sick!

2098. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Dec. 20, 1781.

I SHOULD not have waited for your sending me a topic if I had had anything entertaining or comfortable to tell you. Who would not be worn out by repetition of disgraces, follies, obstinacy, and profligate corruption? When fools are converted into heroes, or blunt tools are blamed for the awkwardness of the artificer, are these novelties worthy of detail! I am weary of writing such a series of paltry circumstances. The crisis of our total ruin comes on with larger strides, and it seems as if it would arrive without any convulsions of the patient. As to county meetings, I will say nothing on them for several reasons that you know. Managed as they have been, I think they will but subdivide our calamities and our disunion, and heal neither. I have a more recent reason that I will not tell you till I see you. In truth it were idle to make objections when they, and I fear everything else is too late. The nation is both insensible and senseless: nor misfortunes, nor dishonour, nor danger can alarm or make it feel. I thought they would: I have been mistaken. I may be so again when I repeat what I have often said, that if ever we do awake, the *réveil* will be terrible; for they who have voluntarily been fools, will pretend they have been dupes (which is not true, as the artifices employed were too shallow), and then being angry, they will enrage themselves to prove that for once they are in the right; they will do an infinite deal of mischief in the wrong place; and then out of repentance as much the contrary way. That some others expect a storm is evident, for a few of the most shameless instigators of the American war are now the loudest against it, and call that apostasy, conviction, though it is solely dictated by the hope of saving their places on a change. The readiest flatterers will always be the first renegades. I dare to say that the soldier who spit in the face of Charles I. as he went to his trial, had some years before been the most noisy and officious when on guard at the gate of Whitehall; but such squabbles are nothing to me, and they who have drugged the bowl must drink the dregs.

I have looked into Mr. Bryant and dipped here and there into Dr. Milles, but without cutting the leaves of the latter. From him one can expect nothing. From the former I did expect ingenuity,

but he seems to have neither taste nor ear, and, which is stranger, to reason poorly. I have only skimmed his second volume. I cannot wade into all that mass of old English and bad authors. Any man may convince me if he will but write enough and dully enough, for I had rather believe than read. Both the Dean and Bryant I could see have inverted Chatterton's character, have erected him into a lad of high and haughty honour, but deny his wonderful parts. Bryant quotes here and there a wretched distich to prove his hypothesis, and then from some of our miserable old rhymers selects here and there a tolerable couplet. He now controverts the supposition of a third personage, though, as I told you last year, he himself had chosen that plea; and yet he again gives some of the MSS. to one Turgot; but for a specimen of his logic see what he says of Gray's beautiful stanza, where he evidently mistakes the sense of the words themselves and their context:—

Hands that the rod of Empire *might* have swayed.

Yet "what were they," says Bryant, "but ploughmen and labourers?" so says Gray; but does not the word *might* imply that had they had education, they might have been Cromwells? but I am as weary of that controversy as if it were a political one.

There is a curious pamphlet worth your looking into, a Letter to Jenkinson; it has made some gross blunders, but goes more to the real point than anything I have seen. Read particularly p. 41, where much is stated in a small compass.

I asked Sir Joshua t'other night if he had done anything towards your Notes; he said No, but he had some ideas in his head, though at present he was busy on arranging his own Notes taken in Flanders. I do not want either, but I do want your Poem published. Adieu! will you not come this winter?

2099. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 21, 1781.

THERE have been no events, except Parliamentary debates, since my last, till last Monday; when news came of Sir Eyre Coote's having defeated Hyder Ally in India, and when we were flattered with promising hopes of Admiral Kempenfeldt's demolishing and disappointing the French expedition from Brest to the West Indies.

Our Admiral had fallen into the thick of their transports, of which nineteen had struck. Commodore Elliot was engaged with the French Admiral, and had dismasted him; and, when the express came away, Kempenfeldt was bearing down with the wind to attack the squadron, which he had been told did not out-number his own fourteen. You may judge how our hopes and impatience rose and increased. I waited till four the next day, when being to dine and pass the evening with Princess Amelia, which I knew would prevent my writing, though post-night, I sent to beg your nephew, if any good news should come, to write to you incontinently. He was not come to town, but was expected every minute. Alas! before I left the Princess, we heard that a second express was just arrived; that our Admiral, besides the fourteen hostile ships, had discovered five more, each mounting 110 or 112 guns; and that, not thinking it prudent to encounter so superior a force, he had retreated, and brought away but fourteen transports, containing about nine hundred men. Neither all of them, nor he himself, are yet arrived, and the expedition has probably continued its course, and there is new danger to our West India Islands.

Perhaps we have not received a worse blow than this disappointment. If Lord Sandwich can weather it, he will be skilful or fortunate indeed! In one word, what can be said either for his having no intelligence of five ships of such magnitude, or for despatching Kempenfeldt with only fourteen, when Rodney was not sailed, and when we have several more ships lying in port at Portsmouth? Most mouths are opened against him, not only in Opposition and in town, but at Court. Lord Rockingham did commence the attack the very next day in the Lords, though not in form; and one piece of luck has already happened to the Great Delinquent, that the Parliament adjourns to-day for the holidays, and will give him a temporary reprieve for manœuvres and defence, if new calamities do not inflame exasperation.

The King of France is said to have sent for Cardinal de Bernis to be Prime Minister again; but that you must know better than I. I am interrupted, and must finish.

2100. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 22, 1781.

Your inquiries about Miss Keppel are very kind indeed, Madam. Till within these four or five days I was not at all alarmed about her; and thought, from her *embonpoint*, that a cough would be of no consequence; but Mrs. Keppel is so terrified by the many fatal disorders that have carried off almost all the house of Albemarle, that she has frightened me too, and but this morning, by the Duke's command, I proposed to her to carry her daughter abroad, to which she immediately consented, and I believe will, if, upon farther consultation, it is judged right.

In answer to your Ladyship's other question, in good truth my serenity is not at all ruffled; nor would it be yet, were it ever likely to be. It would be as ruffleable as a porcupine, had it set up its quill yet, for hitherto I am only reading both Bryant and Milles by deputy. I skimmed the former's second volume, and dipped into one or two pages of the latter, but though I have tough patience at a tedious book, I doubt I shall never compass all the ancient lore in Mr. Bryant's first volume, and still less its *caput mortuum* in the Dean's. I let Lady Ailesbury carry Bryant to Park Place before I had finished a quarter of what I intend to read, and have lent t'other to a clergyman. Mr. Conway says Mr. Bryant has very nearly convinced him, and he (Bryant) certainly has ingenuity enough to be a formidable adversary, whether one is in the right or in the wrong; yet, where I have looked into him, I thought I saw weak places. However, I am unalterably determined not to write a word more on the subject. I have declared I would not in my defence of myself; and have determined, besides, not to write more on any subject, and least on this, because, having unwillingly taken a part, I must be prejudiced. But, in fact, I look on this controversy, as I do on other problems of faith which can never be cleared up to the satisfaction of everybody; and I do not believe that the salvation of my understanding depends on crediting legends, when it requires so much learning to prove it probable that the supposed author ever existed; and if he did exist, that he was inspired; which Rowley must have been. The corporal evidence I had seen before, and very vague and inconclusive it is; but shall I not be doubly out of luck, Madam, if Rowley is pronounced Gospel? I

believed in Ossian, who is now tumbled into the Apocrypha; and I doubted of Rowley, who is now to rank with Moses and the prophets! —I doubt I have very bad judgment.

As to Lord Macartney, whom your Ladyship describes with the Arabian eloquence of Scheherezade, and with much more wit, when you make him ride on three elephants at once like Astley.[1] I own, since his paltry behaviour to me about Lady Mary Wortley's letters, I take no part in his triumphs, nor care whether he rises in the east or sinks again in the west. He was treacherous to me at the very moment he had been greatly obliged to me. I have not equal faith in Lady Derby's triumphs—yet, as I have been telling you, I had rather believe anything than contest it; and were I to hear that Dr. Hunter was sent to Versailles to make a new treaty of Paris with the Queen's accoucheur (who you say, Madam, is made free of the theatre), I would not dispute it—nay, I should rejoice; for, considering how many *miscarriages* we have had, it could not be so scandalous a piece as the last.

2101. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Christmas Day, 1781.

I ALWAYS answer immediately, Madam, if I have time; because as letters ought to be nothing but extempore conversations upon paper, if the reply is not speedy, the curiosity that prompted the question may be passed before the answer arrives. Nothing, then, can be further from my thoughts than accompanying my niece abroad, if she should go, which is not determined, as her disorder seems to be an inflammation on her breast, and not a tendency to consumption. For me, who only pendulate from Berkeley Square to Strawberry, and think Ampthill as far as the Antipodes, and who was near dashing my brains out on Saturday night, by missing a step at Mrs. Keppel's door, if David had not caught me in his arms like a baby thrown out of window when a house is on fire, is it possible that I should think myself able to convoy anybody else? Oh! no, Madam; nor were I as brawny as Commodore Johnstone, would I set my foot on the Continent at present, when every country in Europe, except we ourselves, must be sensible of our shame!

[1] There is some obscurity here which I am unable to clear up. Nor can I explain the reference to Lady Mary Wortley. Lord Macartney married one of Lady Mary's grand-daughters, viz., Jane, daughter of the Minister Lord Bute.—CUNNINGHAM.

For your Ladyship's other question, why I do not publish my letter on Chatterton? what, because I don't know who in the newspaper wants to see it! My resolutions must be light as gossamer if such a breath could make them waver. I flattered myself that you knew me enough to be sure that when I have once made a resolution, it is not the easiest thing in the world to shake it: much less such an idle controversy as, whether Rowley or Chatterton was Rowley, which is as indifferent to me as who is churchwarden of St. Martin's parish. And how can I care now what is thought about it? When I have outlived all the principles and maxims purchased for us *by the noble army of Martyrs*, and when there is nothing so foolish and absurd that is not believed and adopted, what matters whether Ossian, or Rowley, or 'Mother Goose's Tales' are canonised as classics? Thank my natal stars I was born in a better age, and had much rather be what I was, an author of a very inferior class twenty years ago, than the brightest luminary that is bound in morocco and gold, and presented to the library in the Park at this disastrous era—to be elbowed by Scotch Metaphysics, and led out of my senses by Scotch historians; and not get a wink of sleep on my shelf, though a forgotten author, from hearing Dr. Hunter teach the youngest Prince his Erse alphabet, or being stunned by a dialogue half Highland and half German, between the librarian and Madame Schevellenberg! Lady, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, &c.

2102. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 28, 1781.

I HAVE gone regularly through three volumes of the 'House of Medici,' and dipped into a good deal of the fourth. It is rather not well written than ill written; the style is more languid than faulty, and thence neither interests nor disgusts. What pleases me most is, that, besides the two first Great Dukes being great men, Cosmo the Second and Ferdinand the Second were very good princes; and, though John Gaston was very vicious, he was not a bad prince: a much larger proportion of good and great, out of seven, than happens to most sovereign families; perhaps to most elevated families. Francis the First seems to have had no virtues; Cosmo the Third would, some few centuries ago, have passed for the best of all; because a proud silly bigot, who impoverished his subjects to enrich

the clergy. In short, I like the author's general impartiality; and, though he sometimes spares his Florentine masters, he has no criminal favour for the rest of the Kings of Europe. I wish the line of Popes were extinct, like the Medici, that the world might have a chance of seeing their true history too. Indeed, Galuzzi gives it roundly, when it comes in his way; so much, that I imagine *that* to have been the chief motive to the publication, and to have originated with Cæsar himself,[1] who may perhaps have an eye to some imperial fiefs usurped by the Popes. The author's severity on such a succession of rascals makes one trust him when he speaks well of any of them. How shameless do others of them appear, when one finds them extending their impudent encroachments, after so large a part of Europe had opened its eyes! On the other hand, how must we English smile at their opposite folly, in seeing them refuse a dispensation for a match with a heretic to our wretched James the First, at the instigation of old Mother Bellarmine! That part is very new to us, and, if Lord Clarendon came to the knowledge of it, he suppressed it; for, though a sincere Protestant, he had so much of the Church in him, that, like the motto on their bells, "Fear God, honour the King," he was always swinging between both. I like the author, too, for touching on the knavery of two of my Noble Authors, the *good* Earls of Salisbury and Northampton; and still more so for the justly bitter things he says of Louis XIII. and Richelieu. He is rather too severe on Henry IV. and Sully; if the first was too easy and good-humoured, and the latter too œconomic a politician to be strictly just, one may rejoice rather than weep when nations have no worse reproaches to make to their governors. The part that diverted me the most, in a ludicrous light, was the Court of the Archbishop of Florence condemning the Parliament of England to pay eight millions two hundred thousand pounds sterling to Dudley, Duke of Northumberland,—another of my Noble Authors! One would think that Court had existed in the present age, when foreigners *think*—I fear I must now say *thought*—there could be no end of our wealth. I wonder such stupendous ideas of our opulence did not weigh with Paul the Fifth to grant the dispensation, in spite of conscientious Bellarmine. Be it remembered for once, that churchmen were more scrupulous than rapacious.

I asked you whether there was any picture of Camilla Martelli.

[1] The Emperor Joseph II.—WALPOLE.

I have found a print of her, among the hundred heads of the House of Medici, by Allegrini. You cannot imagine how pleased I am to find that I have lost so little either of my Italian or of my memory of Florence, after so long a disuse. I am sorry you never mention any of my acquaintance there: no doubt, most of them are gone off; but you would oblige me by naming such as are still alive. This letter is a parenthesis between our present momentous politics, written in the holidays, in the solitude and silence of Strawberry. I shall finish it in town, whither I shall go in two days, expecting to hear new disasters.

Monday night, 31*st.*

I have this moment received yours of the 13th by your third courier, with those inclosed for your nephew and mine. I imagine the former is not in town, but I shall send it to his house; the other never is, but the mere hours of his waiting; but I have sealed, directed, and sent it to the post. The monument[1] will not be dear, but it is ugly enough in conscience. Yet, what signifies that, or the blunders? Over the arms is a baron's coronet, I suppose to imply my Lady's barony of Clinton; yet it should not be there, for the shield containing only the arms of Walpole and some of the quarterings, makes it represent only a Baron Walpole; that is, my brother before my father's death. To signify Lady Clinton, it ought to be her arms quartering Clinton in a shield of pretence in the middle of her husband's arms, or rather in the same manner, but in a lozenge, as a widow; for the barony did not descend to her in my brother's life. But all this would be algebra to a Florentine sculptor;—nor do I wish to have it clear for whom it was designed, —nor, if known, will any English herald or antiquary probably ever see it. My Lord, in this past month, determined on an expedition to visit his new domains in Dorset and Devon shires, and his seats at Piddletown and Heanton were ordered to be aired and prepared for his reception, and Lucas was despatched to the latter (in Devonshire) to notify his arrival, and invite the neighbouring gentry to the ceremony of inauguration. The Earl followed, arrived at Piddletown (in Dorsetshire), changed his mind, returned to his hovel at Eriswell, and left Lucas to tell the other county how perfectly his Lordship is in his senses.

I have not found a tittle of news in town; therefore I shall send

[1] The one intended for Lady Orford, at Leghorn.—WALPOLE.

this away by the post to-morrow, and write again by the return of your courier, if I hear any novelty.

Pray, whose is the portrait that my Lord has so tenderly redemanded? The Countess certainly did not love any picture of our family enough to lug it behind her chaise to Italy, as Lady Pomfret did Lady Bell Finch's, for which you remember she had a new frame made in every town she stopped at. Perhaps it is his grandpapa Jack Harris's, or Mr. Sewallis Shirley's, the latter of whom had some claim to be registered on the future monument. In my Lord's fit of posthumous piety he may have grown fond, too, of step grandfathers and fathers, though he has not yet acquired affection for those who passed for his real progenitors.

After Doctors' Commons had lain fallow for a year or two, it is again likely to bear a handsome crop of divorces. Gallantry in this country scorns a mask. Maids only intrigue, wives elope. *C'est l'étiquette.* Two young married ladies are just gone off—no, this is a wrong term for one of them; for she has just come to town, and drives about London, for fear her adventure should be forgotten before it comes into the House of Lords. It is a Lady Worseley, sister of Lady Harrington. On hearing she was gone away with a Major Blisset, another young gentleman said, at St. James's coffee-house, "I have been very secret; but now, I think, I am at liberty to show this letter." It was couched in these laconic and sentimental terms: "I have loved Windham, I did love Graham, but now I love only you, by God." I am a little angry for my nephew, Lord Cholmondeley, who has been most talked of for her, and who is thought to have the largest pretensions to her remembrance. If you see him, you may tell him I resent her forgetfulness; we believe him in Italy. Adieu!

2103. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 30, 1781.

We are both hearty friends, my dear Sir, for I see we have both been reproaching ourselves with silence at the same moment. I am much concerned that you have had cause for yours.[1] I have had

[1] "When I look at your last letter it startles me; yet I am not totally without excuse: I was loth to trouble you unnecessarily, and have been confined for three months with a constant indisposition both of mind and body, so that I have had no inclination to write or do anything. About ten days ago this hovering gout fixed

less, though indisposed too in a part material for correspondence—my right hand, which has been in labour of chalk-stones this whole summer, and at times so nervous as to tremble so much, that, except when quite necessary, I have avoided a pen. I have been delivered of such a quantity of chalky matter, that I am not only almost free from pain, but hope to avoid a fit this winter. How there can be a doubt what the gout is, amazes me! what is it but a concretion of humours, that either stop up the fine vessels, cause pain and inflammation, and pass away only by perspiration; or which discharge themselves into chalk-stones, which sometimes remain in their beds, sometimes make their passage outwardly? I have experienced all three. It may be objected that the sometimes instantaneous removal of pain from one limb to another is too rapid for a current of chalk—true, but not for the humour before coagulated. As there is, evidently, too, a degree of wind mixed with the gout, may not that wind be impregnated with the noxious effluvia, especially as the latter are pent up in the body and may be corrupted?—I hope your present complaint in the foot will clear the rest of your person.

Many thanks for your etching of Mr. Browne Willis: I shall value it not only as I am a collector, but because he was your friend. What shall I say about Mr. Gough? he is not a pleasant man, and I doubt will tease me about many things, some of which I never cared about, and all which I interest myself little about now, when I seek to pass my remnant in the most indolent tranquillity. He has not been very civil to me, he worships the fools I despise, and I conceive has no genuine taste; yet as to trifling resentments, when the objects have not acted with bad hearts, I can most readily lose them. Please Mr. Gough, I certainly shall not; I cannot be very grave about such idle studies as his and my own, and am apt to be impatient, or laugh when people imagine I am serious about them. But there is a stronger reason why I shall not satisfy Mr. Gough. He is a man to minute down whatever one tells him that he may call information, and whip it into his next publication. However, though I am naturally very frank, I can regulate myself by those I converse with; and as I shall be on my guard, I will not decline visiting Mr. Gough, as it would be illiberal or look surly if I refused. You shall have the merit, if you please, of my assent; and shall tell him, I shall be glad to see him any morning at eleven

itself in one foot, and gives me better spirits and an ability to write." *Cole to Walpole, 22nd Dec.*, 1781. *MS.*—CUNNINGHAM.

o'clock. This will save you the trouble of sending me his new work, as I conclude he will mention it to me.

I more willingly assure you that I shall like to see Mr. Steevens,[1] and to show him Strawberry. You never sent me a person you commended, that I did not find deserved it.

You will be surprised when I tell you, that I have only dipped into Mr. Bryant's book, and lent the Dean's before I had cut the leaves, though I had peeped into it enough to see that I shall not read it. Both he and Bryant are so diffuse on our antiquated literature, that I had rather believe in Rowley than go through their proofs. Mr. Warton and Mr. Tyrwhitt have more patience, and intend to answer them—and so the controversy will be two hundred years out of my reach. Mr. Bryant, I did find, begged a vast many questions, which proved to me his own doubts. Dr. Glynn's foolish evidence made me laugh, and so did Mr. Bryant's sensibility *for me;* he says Chatterton treated me very *cruelly* in one of his writings. I am sure I did not feel it so. I suppose Bryant means under the title of Baron of Otranto, which is written with humour. I must have been the sensitive plant if anything in that character had hurt me! Mr. Bryant too, and the Dean, as I see by extracts in the papers, have decorated Chatterton with sanctimonious honour—think of that young rascal's note, when, summing up his gains and losses by writing for and against Beckford, he says, "Am glad he is dead by 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*" *There* was a lad of too nice honour to be capable of forgery! and a lad who, they do not deny, forged the poems in the style of 'Ossian,' and fifty other things. In the parts I did read, Mr. Bryant, as I expected, reasons admirably, and staggered me; but when I took up the poems called Rowley's again, I protest I cannot see the smallest air of antiquity but the old words. The whole texture is conceived on ideas of the present century. The liberal manner of thinking of a monk so long before the Reformation is as stupendous; and where he met with Ovid's Metamorphoses, Eclogues, and plans of Greek tragedies, when even Caxton, a printer, took Virgil's 'Æneid' for so rare a novelty, are not less incomprehensible: though on these things I speak at random, nor have searched for the era when the Greek and Latin classics came again to light—at present I imagine long after our Edward the Fourth.

Another thing struck me in my very cursory perusal of Bryant.

[1] George Steevens, the Shakspeare commentator.—CUNNINGHAM.

He asks where Chatterton could find so much knowledge of English events? I could tell him where he might, by a very natural hypothesis, though merely an hypothesis. It appears by the evidence, that Canninge left six chests of manuscripts, and that Chatterton got possession of some or several. Now, what was therein *so probably* as a diary drawn up by Canninge himself, or some churchwarden or wardens, or by a monk or monks? Is anything more natural than for such a person, amidst the events at Bristol, to set down such other public facts as happened in the rest of the kingdom? Was not such almost all the materials of our ancient story? There is actually such an one, with some curious collateral facts, if I am not mistaken,—for I write by memory,—in the 'History of Furness' or 'Fountain's Abbey,' I forget which: if Chatterton found such an one, did he want the extensive literature on which so much stress is laid? Hypothesis for hypothesis,—I am sure this is as rational an one as the supposition that six chests were filled with poems never else heard of.

These are my indigested thoughts on this matter—not that I ever intend to digest them—for I will not, at sixty-four, sail back into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and be drowned in an ocean of monkish writers of those ages or of this! Yours most sincerely.

2104. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Jan. 3, 1782.

I HAVE seen an 'Ode to Hope' by the Duchess of Devonshire and Hope's 'Answer.' The first is easy and prettily expressed, though it does not express much. The second is the genteelest sermon I ever saw and by much the best-natured, and the expression charming. The conclusive lines are admirable, and the first time I believe that a compliment to a fine lady conveyed a most grave lesson of morality; yet so delicately that it might be read at a ball without shocking a fine gentleman. It is precisely the reverse of *not mentioning hell to ears polite.*[1] Nay, though flattery and poetry, it must be pronounced in the pulpit, all this is such a novelty that I wish for a copy of both, *s'entend*, as the first founds one part of the merit of the second.

[1] Pope.—CUNNINGHAM.

I was refreshed by this sight after being stupified by Dr. Milles' waggon-load of notes on Rowley, which I have at last been reading. They have all the dull impertinence of a Dutch Commentary, an ostentatious parade of all he knows, to the purpose or not, accompanied with bombast preferences of Rowley to Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Homer, Virgil, &c. &c. I am suffocated: pray let *Hope* give me some comfort. I know nothing else, the war, and the French Fleet and the West Indies, and Lord Sandwich, and Lord Cornwallis, are all gone out of town, I believe for the holidays.

There is a nightingale-woman I am told, called the Allegranti, who sings so sweetly that Lady Mary Duncan and Lady Mount-Edgecumbe turn their backs when she warbles, because you know people only hear with their faces, and nothing is fit to be heard but Pacchierotti. As I have no ear but in my eyes I shall go to see this Philomel.

Pray write to me for I have nothing to do, and nothing to say: I can still answer letters or questions, but I find I cannot answer them if they are not written or asked: my goose-quill is grown very grey.

2105. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Monday night, Jan. 7, 1782.

I was angry, I am angry; but the Gods know, not with you, Madam, nor with anybody else in particular. I am aggrieved by nobody. Mine is an honester and an unselfish indignation. I am hurt to see all prospects annihilated that would have made one care about what is to survive one. Nothing will be left of England but the vestiges of its grandeur; and what shocks one already is, that the Vandalism that overspreads ruined empires has anteceded our last moments. Bad taste, spite, calumny, pert dulness, and blundering affectation of humour have taken place of everything agreeable. I would not quote such records as the newspapers, if they were not the oracles of the times, and what everybody reads and cites. Besides Macpherson's daily column of lies, is there a paragraph that is not scandalous or malevolent even in those that are set apart as a tithe for truth? Half of each is replete with error and ignorance. If a family has a misfortune of any kind, it is cast in every mould in ill-nature's shop, and the public is *diverted* in every way in which it can be misconstrued. I need instance but

in the late melancholy adventure of Lord Camden's daughter. Is not a country more savage than Hottentots, where all private distresses are served up the next morning for the breakfast and entertainment of the public? When you have waded through the scandal of the day, the next repast is a long dissertation on two contending pantomimes, while a mixture of losses of ships and armies and islands is a glaring mark of the insensible stupidity of the age, which is less occupied by national disgrace and calamity, than by slander that used to be confined to old maids, and follies only fit for children. A week's newspapers preserved to the end of the next century will explain why we are fallen so low. They would supply Voltaire with a chapter on *les mœurs du temps*. I think I have justified myself and my contempt for the times I live in, Madam, and why I am not ambitious of having it remembered that I belonged to them.

I cannot answer your Ladyship's questions about Lord Essex's trial; indeed I do not remember the circumstance.

Miss Keppel is much better. Sir Richard Jebb is confident of its being a bilious case.

I have been this evening at Miss Monkton's[1] to see Mademoiselle Theodore dance a minuet with young Edgecumbe; and to-morrow I shall go to the Opera, for the first time this year, to see her and hear the 'Allegranti,' as Queen Elizabeth's reign is over, and there is no likelihood of there being any trials. I do not believe that even her ghost condescended to peep at the ball that was given at Hatfield last Thursday to the county of Hertford.

Pray do not forget Lord Chandos at Woburn. Mine is in black profusely laced with silver, a white waistcoat much slashed, and a round black hat, with a rich jewel.

Tuesday.

My project of going to the Opera is addled. I have got the rheumatism in my left arm, and cannot put on my coat. It is not the gout; I know his tooth too well to mistake his bite.

[1] Honourable Mary Monkton, daughter of the first Viscount Galway and wife of the seventh Earl of Cork and Orrery, well known to the readers of Boswell as "the lively Miss Monkton, who used always to have the finest bit of blue at her parties." She was born in April 1746 and died on the 30th of May, 1840.—Cunningham.

2106. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 10, 1782.

I AM forced to write to you with Kirgate's pen, for though my right hand is better, the left is totally useless and muffled to above the elbow with my old biennial visitor, the gout. As he had outstayed his term, I was in hopes that, like prelatic visitors, he would relax and relax till he totally forgot me: however, by being dilatory in his returns, I may, upon the whole, baulk him of one progress.

I do not at all believe that there was a grain of partiality in my approbation of your Ode: ask the other Princes of Parnassus if I am apt to flatter them more than I do other Highnesses. I shall certainly demand a copy from you, if I cannot get one otherwise, which I don't imagine will be difficult. Lady Jersey gave both Odes to Mrs. Delany; and though I may see neither of them this month from my confinement, Lord and Lady Harcourt will be in town to-night, and to them I shall apply.

It will be no compliment to cede to you Dean Milles's huge book: I have not touched it this week, nor waded through the last hundred pages. You will find that I have scribbled a few short notes here and there in the margin, therefore, don't let it go out of your own hands; but I am in no hurry for it, nor shall probably ever make use of them. Much less will I publish my own pamphlet, which might oblige me to say more; if you will, I am sure I shall be diverted; but as to curing the world of foolish credulity—nothing but a new deluge could effect it, and that for no long period. Nay, would one flap fools and leave the knaves in quiet? However, on some vigil of your nobler anger you may kill flies if you please.

I will send the book to the coach to-morrow, therefore, you will inquire for it about the time of its arrival.

Mrs. Delany has lent me another most pleasing work of Mr. Gilpin—his 'Essay on Forest Trees' considered in a picturesque light. It is perfectly new, truly ingenious, full of good sense in an agreeable style, and void of all affectation—sad recommendations to such times! Consequently, I suppose, it will not be published! Adieu! I am in pain and tired.

2107. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 12, 1782.

YOUR Ladyship will excuse my employing Kirgate,[1] as I am not able to write myself. One would have thought that I had been too well acquainted with the gout's voice to mistake his accent for a stranger's; but, as the pain began on the inside of my elbow, I flattered myself that it was only rheumatic. Next morning I was cured of my mistake, and at present my poor lean hand is colossal. I have had much less pain than fever, but three restless nights have convinced me so much of my extreme weakness, that should the gout take a fancy, as it did some years ago, of making the grand tour of my person, I should little expect to get through it; indeed, I cannot now attempt even to dictate an answer to above one or two paragraphs in your Ladyship's letter: much less is my head clear enough to tell you the whole strange story of Mrs. Steuart. The family themselves neither are nor can ever be certain in their belief; but upon the whole it seems to me to have been a sudden fit of lunacy with which she had been afflicted.

Captain Waldegrave was so very obliging and good-natured as to call on me this morning, and I was happy to see him look so much better than I expected after all his vexations, disappointments, and illness. He talked of being at Ampthill I think on Monday next.

Doctor Dee's black stone was named in the catalogue of the collection of the Earls of Peterborough, whence it went to Lady Betty Germaine. She gave it to the last Duke of Argyle, and his son, Lord Frederic, to me.

2108. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 17, 1782.

I HAVE received yours of the 29th of last month, and will answer it in this as well as I can; though I have but one hand at liberty, having been confined these ten days by the gout in the other and its elbow. I am not void of all hopes that the fit will proceed no farther; and then, though my prison may last as much longer as it

[1] This letter is in his servant's hand-writing.—R. VERNON SMITH.

has done, I shall think myself very fortunate, for it will be the shortest fit I have had these ten years; nor am I young or fond enough of the world to pant after much liberty beyond that of my limbs.

There has been no public event since my last, but the French purchase of St. Eustatia from our Governor of it. What shame there is in that transaction the buyers, I suppose, will make over to the seller, unless the Opposition borrow part of it for the Ministers. The Parliament is to meet next week, and the town expects that, before that, Lord George Germaine's resignation will be notified—not that I tell you he has resigned, but such is the universal persuasion; and the last symptom on which conjectures are formed is, that his family have said he would not be at the Queen's birth-day to-morrow. Your nephew, I conclude, will now come to town, and send you fresher and more authentic Parliamentary intelligence than I can.

We hear with some surprise of the Emperor's very rapid suffocation of nunneries. Do not the monks regret their helpmates, and tremble for themselves? If Cæsars could tremble, I should ask if Cæsar had no apprehension for himself. Are all the Jesuits extinct that despatched poor Ganganelli? Is not the Vatican hung with sackcloth? I suppose the next thing we shall hear will be, that those pillars of toleration, the King of Prussia and the Czarina, have opened asylums on the road for all those chaste doves that choose to leave their first spouse. The next century will most probably exhibit a very new era, which the close of this has been, and is, preparing. The annihilation of the Jesuits paved the way. Popery totters, though we preposterously stepped in to save it; but when old follies grow exploded, what can save them? not their own gibberish nor legerdemain, which gave them success. This is no impeachment to new impostures; but for the old, I would not answer how far the Revolution may extend.

The enfranchisement of America will be another capital feature of the New Era, and, sooner or later, will extend beyond British colonies. Whether mankind will be advantaged by these *bouleversemens*, I am not so clear; I mean, in their capacity of Reason and Liberty,—charters seldom obtained and confirmed without much bloodshed. Soldiers, I fear, will not be laid aside, though Priests may; and then what signifies whether one is chained or murdered by a fellow in a black coat, or a fellow in a red one?

18*th.*

Lord George Germaine has indubitably resigned, it is said, to be a peer; and that the office will not be filled up, its province being gone. His second tome has not been brilliant, but has made the first the more remembered—no advantage neither. What reasons he assigns for retirement I have not heard; neither his associates nor the public wished him to stay. The next chapter will be his principal enemy Lord Sandwich's, who has numerous foes too, but more friends.

2109. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 19, 1782.

I HAD seen in the papers the epigram your Ladyship has sent me to-day, and liked it so much, that I cut it out. Like well I did, too, the Ampthillian lines. It was the subject alone that I disapproved in them; and, though you say I had no right to take exception, as there was no compliment to my roses and lilies, I do maintain that my complexion is likely to last as long as my fame, and, therefore, if I should have been in the right to be displeased at a compliment to the more durable of the two, I might justly protest against one to the shorter lived of the twain. Nay, as much as your Ladyship may disparage my looks (which I believe you did out of revenge), I have no doubt but the outside of my head will survive the inside; and, therefore, as I may last till I am a fine man of my age, I beg you will let me enjoy what I can, instead of nursing me with visions of what I shall never attain.

It is my belief, though still a problem, that Lord George Germaine has resigned; which is signing his confession, at least, that America is lost. The King has had a violent bleeding at (his own) nose, which returned yesterday at the drawing-room. Scarce any great ladies, except those immediately attached to the Court, were at the birth-day, in resentment for not having been asked to the Queen's balls last year. Upon my word, I believe every body will have spirit at last in England, except the two Houses of Parliament.

So Lord Ossory comes on Monday, and your Ladyship very early *next* winter!

2110. TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.[1]

Jan. 26, 1782.

Your Lordship will forgive me if I make but a short answer to the honour of your last, as I write with difficulty, having but the use of one hand, the gout having disabled the other for these three weeks.

I do not know whether the pictures of James III. and his Queen remain at Kensington. I was told some years ago that his Majesty having ordered all his store-pictures to be assembled at that palace in order to select such as he should like to replace those at Windsor and Hampton Court, which he had sent to the Queen's House, did give the residue to the then Lord Chamberlain and his Deputy. I can easily know from Mrs. Loyd the Housekeeper whether the portraits of the Scottish King and Queen remain there; and I can as easily obtain from the present Lord Chamberlain permission for your Lordship to have them copied; but that cannot be done without payment of fees to the Officers of the Chamberlain's office, and which it does not depend on Lord Hertford to dispense with, as they have a right, and none of the Royal Pictures are granted to be copied otherwise.

The Lady Arabella Stuart is not at Devonshire House, my Lord, but at the Duke of Portland's at Welbeck.[2] If I said otherwise I misinformed your Lordship. I have a copy of it in water-colours by Vertue, which your Lordship's painter shall copy if you please; there is also an old print of her, but extremely scarce. I have one, and there is another in the Collection of English Heads, which Lord Mountstuart purchased of Mr. Bull.

I have had my two volumes of 'Royal Authors' bound at your Lordship's command, and they shall be sent if your Lordship will tell me by what conveyance. I forget whether I thought anything else of mine might be acceptable too, but I had rather forget than be vain or impertinent. I have the honour to be, with great respect, my Lord, &c.,

Hor. Walpole.

[1] Now first published. The original is in the British Museum, Addit. MS. 21,555. —Cunningham.

[2] This very curious picture I found in 1857, not at Welbeck, but at Bolsover. The present Duke of Portland has had it restored to Welbeck.—Cunningham.

2111. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 27, 1782.

For these three weeks I have had the gout in my left elbow and hand, and can yet but just bear to lay the latter on the paper while I write with the other. However, this is no complaint, for it is the shortest fit I have had these sixteen years, and with trifling pain; therefore, as the fits decrease, it does ample honour to my bootikins, regimen, and method. Next to my bootikins, I ascribe much credit to a diet-drink of dock-roots, of which Dr. Turton asked me for the receipt, as the best he had ever seen, and which I will send you if you please. It came from an old physician at Richmond, who did amazing service with it in inveterate scurvies,—the parents, or ancestors at least, I believe, of all gouts. Your fit I hope is quite gone.

Mr. Gough has been with me. I never saw a more dry or more cold gentleman. He told me his new plan is a series of English monuments. I do like the idea, and offered to lend him drawings for it.

I have seen Mr. Steevens too, who is much more flowing. I wish you had told me it was the editor of Shakspeare, for, on his mentioning Dr. Farmer, I launched out and said, he was by much the most rational of Shakspeare's commentators, and had given the only sensible account of the authors our great poet had consulted. I really meant those who wrote before Dr. Farmer. Mr. Steevens seemed a little surprised, which made me discover the blunder I had made, for which I was very sorry, though I had meant nothing by it; however, do not mention it. I hope he has too much sense to take it ill, as he must have seen I had no intention of offending him; on the contrary, that my whole behaviour marked a desire of being civil to him as your friend, in which light only you had named him to me. Pray take no notice of it, though I could not help mentioning it, as it lies on my conscience to have been even undesignedly and indirectly unpolite to anybody you recommend. I should not, I trust, have been so unintentionally to anybody, nor with intention, unless provoked to it by great folly or dirtiness. Adieu!

2112. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Friday night, late.

Though I am infinitely obliged to your Lordship for so readily undertaking to make peace, I shall have no occasion to trouble you, unless you should by mere accident have an opportunity of softening the reception,—for Mr. C[onway] and Lady A[ylesbury] have taken the matter with the utmost good humour and good sense, and neither of them care a straw whether they are received a little better or a little worse,—all the difference will be that the latter will make them go the seldomer. He is not aiming to be Prime Minister by the House of Commons, and still less by Cumb[erland] House. It would be well if everybody had as little pride, and had had as little ambition.

Your Lordship's most devoted,
H. Walpole.

2113. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 7, 1782.

I anticipated Lord George Germain's exit before it was complete: nay, it is not yet, though imminent. It is not, I believe, entirely a voluntary act, much less a disgrace, but merely the effect of disagreement with some of his colleagues; consequently, I should think, would not produce much variation of measures, as Lord George certainly did not resist such as made his court best. That he was no unwelcome servant is plain, as he is to be a Viscount; and his nephew, the Duke of Dorset, succeeds Lord Falmouth, who is just dead, as Captain of the Band of Pensioners. Mr. [Welbore] Ellis is to be Secretary of State in the room of Lord George.

If your nephew has written to you lately, you will have seen that I had no event to tell of any public notoriety. There have been some ineffectual efforts at opposition in both Houses, and not very remarkable. Nor do I imagine that the prosecution of Lord Sandwich in the House of Commons will have any serious termination. Lord Cornwallis is arrived, and that man of wretched fame, Arnold. There was something of humour mixed with the severity which the Americans meditated for him, had they taken

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

him in his passage, as they attempted and were near doing. They intended to cut off his leg, which had been wounded in their service, and bury it with military honours, and then hang the rest of his person. I think he cannot do better now than consort with General Paoli.

There has been lately the most dreadful catastrophe in the City of which I ever heard or read. A stationer's wife, a very fond mother, went up, as she did constantly, to see her children in bed. She had seven, the eldest not nine years old. By some strange inadvertence, she left a candle near a curtain of one of the beds. It caught; the house was burnt, and every one of the poor babes! Lady Molesworth's tragedy[1] was not so horrid, for she was so happy as to be consumed too. These poor parents are both alive.

I think, when I wrote last, I was confined with the gout. It has proved the slightest fit I have had for many years, was only in my left hand and elbow, and did not last a month; yet both my hands are terribly afflicted with chalk-stones. However, it is plain that my bootikins, regimen, temperance and perseverance in my cold system have prodigiously lessened my sufferings; and, if I live to an hundred, I suppose I shall be a very healthy young fellow. Still, I do not intend to cut my colt's-tooth till past ninety. So far from juvenile airs, I lead a most recluse life, and scarcely ever go into any public, indeed only to very private places, except what I cannot avoid, the public nights at Gloucester-house, and they are not very numerous. I have been once to the Opera to hear the Allegranti, whom I like, and who is almost as much in fashion as Vestris the dancer was last year: the applause to her is rather greater. Pacchierotti is much admired too, and the dancers are a capital set. So, you see we bear our disgraces with eminent philosophy. Pleasure does not seem to know that there is any want of money, or weight of taxes. I have not heard from you long. I expect you to tell me a great deal of the Pope's lamentations. To be sure, the Great-Duke does not compliment him with a suppression of your carnival.

Friday, 8th.

The inquiry on Lord Sandwich died suddenly this morning, at three o'clock, of a vote of approbation of 205 to 183.

The Duke de Chartres[2] is going to Constantinople. It was asked, why? Answer,—*Pour apprendre à être grand seigneur.*

[1] See vol. iv. p. 77.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Louis-Philippe-Joseph, only son of the Duc d'Orleans, whom he succeeded in 1785. WALPOLE.

We have a report, that Minorca is taken: had the news arrived a few hours sooner, it might have been thrown into the vote of approbation.

2114. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 7, 1782.

I EXPECTED that you would at least acknowledge the receipt of Dr. Milles: I can tell you that if you will not stir a finger to encourage me, mine grow so very helpless that they will soon resign their pen like more puissant secretaries, and a little more willingly. This fit of mine was very short, not a whole month—what care you? but it has left such weakness and so many chalk eggs that my sufferings are far from eased. The Dean and Mr. Bryant are not received with such implicit deference as I concluded they would meet. Many pens are whetting. A Mr. Malone has published some strong criticisms on them, but unluckily has attempted humour, which is not an antiquary's weapon.

Well! after a fortnight's suspense it is certain that Lord George Germain is to resign and to be a Viscount. Don't imagine that *otium cum dignitate* was his own choice, still less his master's; and still less is that a sacrifice to a ruined nation. No, it is a mere cabal, an effort of a faction, whose fears first dictated it. During the recess the Lord Advocate wrote to Lord North that he could not serve any longer with Lord George, and the letter was delivered not unwillingly. The writer hoped to succeed the proscribed. The letter was exceedingly ill received, and Lord George was much pressed to remain; nay, this day sevennight the Lord Advocate was not spoken to. However, as mighty Emperors must submit now and then to their Janissaries, *starvation* himself is rewarded for this closet insurrection with the place of Treasurer of the Navy (6000*l.* per year) in the room of old Ellis, (*ready for all posts*) who is made Secretary of State for late America. Dr. Warton will wish himself joy, who in his new volume on Pope had just said that the poet would be happy if he knew that his pleasant Villa is occupied by a *man of such virtue, learning, and taste.* I should think not, if one may judge of what he said on much such another transfer of property,—

> And Helmsley, once proud Buckingham's delight,
> Slides to a Scrivener, or a City Knight.

It is very diverting to hear how the courtiers *now* rail at Lord George, as if this was the moment of his greatest criminality!—in short the treachery and the rewards both to the traitor and to the betrayed are of a piece, and constitute no new æra.

Anything is preferable to such politics; I am sure two good stories are: here they are. T'other night at Brooks's the conversation turned on Lord Falkland; Fitzpatrick said he was a very weak man, and owed his fame to Lord Clarendon's partiality. Charles Fox was sitting in a deep reverie, with his knife in his hand. "There," continued Fitzpatrick, "I might describe Charles meditating on his ruin of his country, ingeminating the words peace! peace! and ready to plunge the knife in his own bosom." —"Yes," rejoined Hare, in the same ironic dolorous tone, "and he would have done so, but happening to look on the handle of the knife, he saw it was silver, and put it in his pocket." The other is an anecdote more fit to rank with the former part of my letter. Sir John Hawkins told it to me last Sunday. When Dr. Johnson was at work on his Shakspeare, Sir John said to him, "Well! Doctor, now you have finished your 'Dictionary,' I suppose you will labour your present work *con amore* for your reputation." "No, Sir," said Johnson, "nothing excites a man to write but necessity." This was but the text—now for the illustration. A clergyman told Sir John very lately, that being with Johnson, he said to him, "Doctor, you have such command of your pen you can do anything: I wish you would write me a sermon." "No, Sir," said the mercenary; "I cannot write but for money; since I have dealt with the heathens, (the booksellers) I have no other inspiration. I knew they could not do without me, and I made them pay five guineas a sheet for my 'Rasselas;'[1] you must pay me if I write for you;" and the five guineas per sheet no doubt was the price. But I do not know why he called the booksellers *heathens*, unless for their worshipping such an uncouth idol as he is: yet he has other motives than lucre, —prejudice, and bigotry, and pride, and presumption, and arrogance, and pedantry are the hags that brew his ink, though wages alone supply him with paper.

How could you forget to tell me of Mr. Whitehead's verses on Nuneham;[2] I am charmed with them. They are the best he ever wrote except *Variety*.

[1] 'Rasselas' was written in the evenings of one week, to defray the expense of his mother's funeral. He sold it for 100*l.*; when the second edition appeared, the "heathens" gave him 25*l.* more.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] "On the late improvement at Nuneham, the seat of the Earl of Harcourt,

They say you do not come to town this winter. I am not surprised; your friends here do not seem to be much in your thoughts!

Friday.

I had not sealed my letter, so can add a paragraph or two. The House of Commons sat till three this morning, when they voted that the conduct of the Navy last year had been the most perfect imaginable; however, there were 183 dissentients to 208 admirers. I suppose people will be so silly as to expect such a minority will increase, yet I dare to say that on next vote they will not be above forty.

The Duc de Chartres had made Madame de Genlis *Gouverneur de ses Enfans;* why should not Madame de Schwellenberg be governor to the Prince, and Bishop Hurd wet-nurse? If you love imperial logic, pray read the Emperor's rescript on the suppression of Popery; it is a model of reasoning that may be applied to the restoration of Popery here, for it shows that everything *tient uniquement de la volonté libre et arbitraire des Princes de la terre* —did you ever see so happy an union as that of *libre* and *arbitraire?*[1]

(Whitehead's Works, iii. 75). He also wrote "Inscription for a Tree on the Terrace at Nuneham."—CUNNINGHAM.

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, Feb. 9th, 1782.

As I heard from Lord Harcourt that your gout was going off I did not trouble you with my obliging enquiries, and I was much immersed in the stupendous work [Milles] which you did me the favour to send me. I am become almost a bankrupt in my correspondence with all my friends. However, I hope to repay you in full by a nameless something which your communication of that work has occasioned. In which, if "I have flapped the fools I have not left the knaves in quiet." But no more of this at present.

I have heard that a man of some consequence, and an F.R.S. (if that be a thing of consequence) who was personally acquainted with Chatterton and to whom he had confessed his fraud, is about to publish what will be a complete confutation. It seems he lay by till the Dean's publication was over,—cruel rogue whoever he be. This account came from Nichols, Printer to the Royal Society. If you can learn more of the matter, I wish you would, and let me know it, for it may be of use to me.

Though my residence will be out in two days, I shall remain here some time longer; therefore do not change your direction till you hear again from me. When I leave this place I shall go to Aston, for I cannot conveniently come to town till late in the spring.

I have nothing more to add at present, except that I am most sincerely yours,

W. MASON.

2115. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 9, 1782.

Lord Ossory says that your Ladyship complains of my not writing; but he could have told you that I have scarce an inch of finger left; one of those with which I am now writing is but recovering of a new explosion of chalk. I believe they look, in little, like the channels of lava from Vesuvius. Indeed, when our Lord is in town, you know it is my compact not to write. He lives at Brooks's, where politics are sown, and in the House of Commons, where they come up. I go scarce anywhere, see few people, and know nothing of the new generations that have been hatched since I went to roost. When I do write, if I had not a sovereign command over my pen, I should talk of nothing but my own caducity, which, as if one's country was a something of which one is part, keeps pace with the body politic, and loses a joint or a faculty every month. As I have not recovered the use of my left hand, so great Britain is losing her right one, Lord George Germaine—Yet, I suppose, like Widdrington in 'Chevy Chase,' she will continue fighting on upon her stumps, Lords Stormont and Hillsborough; nay, what may she not recover with the semblance of a new secretary, who has all the activity of an Aulic counsellor, the circumstantial minuteness of a churchwarden, and the vigour of another Methusalem. Even the respectable Ellis! what enterprises will be set on foot by this dashing old Parr and his contemporary, my Lord President Jenkins! Well, I shall expect to be sent for, since the empire is to be recovered by antediluvians.

Our Lord, to be sure, has told you, Madam, how, in one day, one culprit was whitewashed in one house, and another blackened in the other. I do not approve the treatment of the latter: the courtiers are ready enough to vilify him, now he is fallen; but the Opposition never hit on a right scent; like mongrels, they only worry hunted game. If they were true bull-dogs, they would fasten on that bloody caitiff, the Lord Advocate [Henry Dundas], who proposed, *en passant*, to starve five thousand fishermen and their families, as a preliminary, and has now got 6000*l.* a year for condemning the American war, which, I suppose, he will now promote again, as advantageous to his new post; and then we fast to beg a blessing on such wars and such war-makers! When Lord North told Lord George Germaine that

ne must go out, he replied, shrewdly, "And pray, my Lord, why are you to stay?" undoubtedly for his modesty and philosophy. When one of the subscribers to his new loan asked him if we were near peace, he replied, "A year nearer than we were, and a year nearer to destruction." I hope our historians, Sir John Dalrymple and Macpherson, will parallel this indifference with that of the Roman magistrates, who expected the Gauls in their curule chairs in the forum. Our dictator would be less sad. Cannot you figure him, Madam, in the midst of St. James's Market, not in a curule, but a very easy chair, with a circle of butchers round him, splitting their sides with laughing at his jokes, and telling them it was true he had undone them, but should continue a good customer still, whoever should be their or his master; it was all one to Punch.

2116. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 14, 1782.

I HAVE received such treasures from you, dear Sir, through the channel of Mr. Nichols [the printer], that I neither know how to thank you, nor to find time to peruse them so fast as I am impatient to do. You must complete your kindness by letting me detain them a few days, till I have gone through them, when I will return them most carefully by the same intervention; and particularly the curious piece of enamel; for though you are, as usual, generous enough to offer it to me, I have plundered you too often already; and indeed I have room left for nothing more, nor have that miserly appetite of continuing to hoard what I cannot enjoy, nor have much time left to possess.

I have already looked into your beautiful illuminated manuscript copied from Dr. Stukeley's letter, and with Anecdotes of the Antiquaries of Bennet College; and I have found therein so many charming instances of your candour, humility and justice, that I grieve to deprive Mr. Gough for a minute even of the possession of so valuable a tract. I will not injure him or it, by begging you to cancel what relates to me, as it would rob you of part of your defence of Mr. Baker. If I wish to have it detained from Mr. Gough till the period affixed in the first leaf, or rather to my death, which will probably precede yours, it is for this reason only; Mr. Gough is apt, as we antiquaries are, to be impatient to tell the world all he knows, which is unluckily much more than the world is at all

impatient of knowing. For what you call *your flaming zeal*, I do not in the least object to it. We have agreed to tolerate each other, and certainly are neither of us infallible. I think, on what we differ most is, your calling *my* opinions *fashionable;* they were when we took them up: I doubt it is yours that are most in fashion now, at least in this country. The Emperor seems to be of *our* party; but, if I like his notions, I do not admire his judgment, which is too precipitate to *be* judgment.

I smiled at Mr. Gough's idea of my declining his acquaintance as a member of that *obnoxious* Society of Antiquaries. It is their folly alone that is obnoxious to me, and can they help that? I shall very cheerfully assist him.

I am glad you are undeceived about the controversial piece in the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' which I should have assured you, as you now know, that it was not mine. I declared, *in my 'Defence,'*[1] that I would publish nothing more about that question. I have not, nor intend it. Neither was it I that wrote the prologue to 'The Count of Narbonne,' but Mr. Jephson himself. On the opposite page I will add the receipt for the diet-drink: as to my regimen, I shall not specify it. Not only you would not adopt it, but I should tremble to have you. In fact, I never do prescribe it, as I am persuaded it would kill the strongest man in England, who was not exactly of the same temperament with me, and who had not embraced it early. It consists in temperance to quantity as to eating—I do not mind the quality; but I am persuaded that great abstinence with the gout is dangerous; for, if one does not take nutriment enough, there cannot be strength sufficient to fling out the gout, and then it deviates to palsies. But my great nostrum is the use of cold water, inwardly and outwardly, on all occasions, and total disregard of precaution against catching cold. A hat you know I never wear, my breast I never button, nor wear great-coats, &c. I have often had the gout in my face (as last week) and eyes, and instantly dip my head in a pail of cold water, which always cures it, and does not send it anywhere else. All this I dare do, because I have so for these forty

[1] Hannah More, in a letter to Mrs. Boscawen, says, "Many thanks for Mr. Walpole's sensible, temperate, and humane pamphlet. I am not quite a convert yet to his side of the Chattertonian controversy, though this elegant writer, and all the antiquaries and critics in the world are against me; but I like much the candid regret he everywhere discovers at not having fostered this unfortunate lad, whose profligate manners, however, I too much fear, would not have done credit to any patronage. Mrs. Garrick read it, and was more interested than I have seen her."—WRIGHT.

years, weak as I look; but Milo would not have lived a week if he had played such pranks. My diet-drink is not all of so Quixote a disposition; any of the faculty will tell you how innocent it is, at least. In a few days, for I am a rapid reader when I like my matter, I will return all your papers and letters; and in the mean time thank you most sincerely for the use of them.

P.S. My old friend, and your acquaintance, Mr. Dodd,[1] died last Saturday—not of cold water. He and I were born on the very same day, but took to different elements. I doubt he had hurt his fortune as well as health.

2117. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 14, 1782.

Your letter and mine must have passed each other incog; for we wrote at the same time, but mine was directed to Aston where I thought you. It may wait, for there was nothing in it that called for dispatch or answer. Yours was more welcome, for it promised your coming, though not speedily, and a good effect from Dr. Milles. I had a good pretence for sending for Mr. Nichols himself, as he is to bring me a parcel from Mr. Cole, and he has promised to come with it himself. I had instructed Kirgate to sift him, but he only replied in general that answers are expected from Mr. Warton, Mr. Steevens, and others. I shall keep this back till I have seen him.

I want you to send me a correct copy of your replicatory 'Ode to the Duchess of Devonshire.' I have at last, after some years of solicitation, prevailed on Lady Harcourt's modesty to allow me to print a small number of copies of some of her poems. As this is to be a favourite Impression, and would of itself be too slender, and yet is not to be profaned with miscellaneous indifferents, I shall add Mr. Whitehead's 'Nuneham,' and (to introduce *your* 'Ode') the Duchess's, if the Duke will consent. She does, but he hesitates. I have always wished that Strawberry should be honoured by something of yours, and here it will be with good company and friends. I might have been dignified by reprinting Lord Hardwicke's ponderous

[1] John Dodd, Esq., of Swallowfield, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Berks Militia, and M.P. for Reading, who died on Saturday, 9th Feb., 1782.—Cunningham.

volume of Sir Dudley Carleton, a favour the miser offered me to save himself the expense, but I was brutal enough to refuse it.

Lord Carmarthen has not captivated the good will of the world by his late attack on the new Peer. It was ill-timed; nor was that Temple of Honour and Virtue so unpolluted as to be liable to contamination: one thing the Insult proved, the servility of the whole military profession who had not been so squeamish.

I forgot to tell you what perhaps you had not heard. Washington is remarkably silent and serious, and when he banquetted his prisoner Lord Cornwallis, spoke little, never smiled, but happening to ask if it was true that Lord Dunmore was returning to resume his government of Virginia, and being answered in the affirmative, the hero burst out into a fit of laughter. This was the Philosopher laughing at the Ass that has left mumbling *thistles* for clover that is out of his reach.

I dined on Monday with the Harcourts at Mrs. Montagu's new palace,[1] and was much surprised. Instead of vagaries, it is a noble simple edifice. When I came home, I recollected that though I had thought it so magnificent a house, there was not a morsel of gilding. It is grand, not tawdry, nor larded and embroidered and pomponned with shreds and remnants, and clinquant like all the Harlequinades of Adam, which never let the eye repose a moment.

From architecture it is natural for me to slide to *Anecdotes of Painting*. There is a new genius, one Opy [*Opie*], a Cornish lad of nineteen, who has taught himself to colour in a strong, bold, masterly style, by studying nature, and painting from beggars and poor children. He has done a head of Mrs. Delany for the King[2]—*oui vraiment*, it is pronounced like Rembrandt, but as I told her, it does not look older than she is, but older than she does.

My next anecdote is only to introduce a *bon mot*. A man, I forget his name, has made a drawing, which he says is for a companion to Copley's 'Death of Lord Chatham.' As the latter exhibits all the great Men of Britain, this is to record the Beauties: but what do you think is the subject he has pitched upon? the *Daughter of Pharaoh* saving Moses. The Princess Royal is the Egyptian Infanta, accompanied by the Duchesses of Gloucester, Cumberland, Devonshire, Rutland, Lady Duncannon, &c., not all Beauties. Well, this Sketch is to be seen *over against Brooks's*. George Selwyn says he

[1] In Portman Square.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] This confirms Mrs. Jameson's conjecture that the portrait of Mrs. Delany (No. 685) at Hampton Court is by Opie.—CUNNINGHAM.



could recommend a better companion for this piece, which should be *the Sons of Pharaoh* (faro) at the opposite house.

Friday, 15th.

Mr. Nichols has been with me, and told me that a person whom he did not name, is known to have furnished some material parchment to Chatterton, which will be disclosed in Mr. Warton's Answer to Bryant and Milles. I did not care to be more particularly inquisitive, lest Nichols should have suspected that I wanted to anticipate this discovery myself, but as Mr. Warton is to publish soon, I will give you the earliest notice of what he shall produce.

You have flattered me I doubt with false hopes of your coming in the spring, for Lord Harcourt says you told him in the same breath that you should not come. I am pleased at least that you know I am so interested in your coming, that you think it necessary to deceive me. You used to say that the Lord of Aston made you dislike London, does its present Lord make you prefer Aston?

The Bishop of Bristol [Bagot] is dead. We shall know who preached the most fulsome sermon on the late Fast by the nomination of the successor.[1] Our High Priests do not abstain from flesh, but in the true Mosaic spirit recommend *letting out blood.*

Adieu! I hate you absent, but I will love you again prodigiously if you will come.

2118. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Feb. 15, 1782.

I WAS so impatient to peruse all the literary stores you sent me, dear Sir, that I stayed at home on purpose to give up a whole evening to them. I have gone through all; your own manuscript, which I envy Mr. Gough, his specimen, and the four letters to you from the latter and Mr. Steevens. I am glad they were both satisfied with my reception. In truth, you know I am neither formal nor austere, nor have any grave aversion to our antiquaries, though I do now and then divert myself with their solemnity about arrant trifles; yet perhaps we owe much to their thinking those trifles of importance, or the Lord knows how they would have patience to investigate them so indefatigably. Mr. Steevens seemed pleasant, but I doubt I shall never be demure enough to conciliate Mr. Gough. Then I have a wicked quality in an antiquary, nay, one that

[1] Bagot's successor was Christopher Wilson, Prebendary of Westminster. — CUNNINGHAM.

annihilates the essence: that is, I cannot bring myself to a habit of minute accuracy about very indifferent points. I do not doubt but there is a swarm of diminutive inaccuracies in my 'Anecdotes'—well! if there is, I bequeath free leave of correction to the microscopic intellects of my continuators. I took dates and facts from the sedulous and faithful Vertue, and piqued myself on little but on giving an idea of the spirit of the times with regard to the arts at the different periods.

The specimen you present me of Mr. Gough's detail of our monuments is very differently treated, proves vast industry, and shows most circumstantial fidelity. It extends, too, much farther than I expected; for it seems to embrace the whole mass of our monuments, nay, of some that are vanished. It is not what I thought, an intention of representing our modes of dress, from figures on monuments, but rather a history of our tombs. It is fortunate, though he may not think so, that so many of the more ancient are destroyed, since for three or four centuries they were clumsy, rude, and ugly. I know I am but a fragment of an antiquary, for I abhor all Saxon doings, and whatever did not exhibit some taste, grace, or elegance, and some ability in the artists. Nay, if I may say so to you, I do not care a straw for archbishops, bishops, mitred abbots, and cross-legged knights. When you have one of a sort, you have seen all. However, to so superficial a *student in antiquity* as I am, Mr. Gough's work is not unentertaining. It has frequently anecdotes and circumstances of kings, queens, and historic personages, that interest me; though I care not a straw about a series of bishops who had only Christian names, or were removed from one old church to a newer. Still I shall assist Mr. Gough with whatever he wants in my possession. I believe he is a very worthy man, and I should be a churl not to oblige any man who is so innocently employed. I have felt the selfish, the proud avarice of those who hoard literary curiosities for themselves alone, as other misers do money.

I observed in your account of the Count-Bishop Hervey, that you call one of his dedicators Martin Sherlock, *Esquire*. That Mr. Sherlock is an Irish clergyman; I am acquainted with him. He is a very amiable good-natured man, and wants judgment, not parts. He is a little damaged by aiming at Sterne's capricious pertness, which the original wore out; and which, having been admired and cried up to the skies by foreign writers of reviews, was, on the contrary, too severely treated by our own. That injustice shocked Mr. Sherlock, who has a good heart and much simplicity, and sent him in dudgeon

last year to Ireland, determined to write no more; yet I am persuaded he will, so strong is his propensity to being an author; and if he does, correction may make him more attentive to what he says and writes. He has no gall; on the contrary, too much benevolence in his indiscriminate praise; but he has made many ingenious criticisms. He is a just, a due enthusiast to Shakspeare: but, alas! he scarce likes Richardson less.

2119. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.[1]

[1782?]

I HAVE been reading a new French translation of the elder Pliny,[2] of whom I never read but scraps before; because, in the poetical manner in which we learn Latin at Eton, we never become acquainted with the names of the commonest things, too undignified to be admitted into verse; and, therefore, I never had patience to search in a dictionary for the meaning of every substantive. I find I shall not have a great deal less trouble with the translation, as I am not more familiar with their common *drogues* than with the Latin. However, the beginning goes off very glibly, as I am not yet arrived below the planets: but do you know that this study, of which I have never thought since I learnt astronomy at Cambridge, has furnished me with some very entertaining ideas! I have long been weary of the common jargon of poetry. You bards have exhausted all the nature we are acquainted with; you have treated us with the sun, moon, and stars, the earth and the ocean, mountains and valleys, &c. &c., under every possible aspect. In short, I have longed for some American poetry, in which I might find new appearances of nature, and consequently of art.

But my present excursion into the sky has afforded me more entertaining prospects, and newer phenomena. If I was as good a poet as you are, I would immediately compose an idyl, or an elegy, the scene of which should be laid in Saturn or Jupiter; and then, instead of a niggardly soliloquy by the light of a single moon, I would describe a night illuminated by four or five moons at least, and they should be all in a perpendicular or horizontal line, according as Celia's eyes (who probably in that country has at least two pair) are disposed in longitude or latitude. You must allow that this system would diversify poetry amazingly.—And then Saturn's

[1] From Walpole's Works, vol. v. p. 653.—CUNNINGHAM.
[2] By Poinsinet de Sivry, in twelve vols. quarto.—WRIGHT.

belt! which the translator says in his notes, is not round the planet's waist, like the shingles; but is a globe of crystal that encloses the whole orb, as you may have seen an enamelled watch in a case of glass. If you do not perceive what infinitely pretty things may be said, either in poetry or romance, on a brittle heaven of crystal, and what furbelowed rainbows they must have in that country, you are neither the Ovid nor natural philosopher I take you for.

Pray send me an eclogue directly upon this plan; and I give you leave to adopt my idea of Saturnian Celias having their everything quadrupled—which would form a much more entertaining rhapsody than Swift's thought of magnifying or diminishing the species in his 'Gulliver.' How much more execution a fine woman would do with two pair of *piercers!* or four! and how much longer the honeymoon would last, if both the sexes have (as no doubt they have) four times the passions, and four times the means of gratifying them!

I have opened new worlds to you.—You must be four times the poet you are, and then you will be above Milton, and equal to Shakspeare, the only two mortals I am acquainted with who ventured beyond the visible diurnal sphere, and preserved their intellects. Dryden himself would have talked nonsense, and, I fear, indecency, on my plan; but you are too good a divine, I am sure, to treat my quadruple love but platonically. In Saturn, notwithstanding their glass-case, they are supposed to be very cold; but platonic love of itself produces frigid conceits enough, and you need not augment the dose.—But I will not dictate. The subject is new; and you, who have so much imagination, will shoot far beyond me. Fontenelle would have made something of the idea, even in prose; but Algarotti would dishearten anybody from attempting to meddle with the system of the universe a second time in a genteel dialogue.[1] Good night! I am going to bed.—Mercy on me! if I should dream of Celia with four times the usual attractions!

2120. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Feb. 22, 1782.

I DOUBT you are again in error, my good Sir, about the letter in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' against the Rowleians, unless Mr.

[1] A translation of Count Algarotti's 'Newtonianismo per le Dame,' by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, under the title of 'Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy explained for the Use of the Ladies; in six Dialogues of Light and Colours,' appeared in 1739.—WRIGHT.

Malone sent it to you; for he is the author, and not Mr. Steevens, from whom I imagine you received it.[1] There is a report that some part of Chatterton's forgery is to be produced by an accomplice; but this I do not answer for, nor know the circumstances. I have scarce seen a person who is not persuaded that the *fashion* of the poems was Chatterton's own, though he might have found some old stuff to work upon, which very likely was the case; but now that the poems have been so much examined, nobody (that has an ear) can get over the modernity of the modulations, and the recent cast of the ideas and phraseology, corroborated by such palpable pillage of Pope and Dryden. Still the boy remains a prodigy, by whatever means he procured or produced the edifice erected: and still it will be found inexplicable how he found time or materials for operating such miracles.

You are in another error about Sir Harry Englefield, who cannot be going to marry a daughter of Lord Cadogan, unless he has a natural one, of whom I never heard. Lord Cadogan has no daughter by his first wife, and his eldest girl by my niece[2] is not five years old. The act of the Emperor to which I alluded, is the general destruction of convents in Flanders, and, I suppose, in his German dominions too. The Pope suppressed the carnival, as mourning, and proposes a journey to Vienna to implore mercy. This is a little different from the time when the pontiffs trampled on the necks of emperors, and called it trampling *super Aspidem et Draconem*. I hope you have received your cargo back undamaged. I was much obliged to you, and am yours ever.

2121. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 23, 1782.

The power of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished: very true, and it is diminished, a good deal indeed, if it valued the extent to which its rays used to extend. Well, but it does not dart its influence so hotly when on that spot that was wont to reflect its beams with so little refraction. Lord

[1] It was afterwards published separately, under the title of 'Cursory Observations on the poems attributed to Thomas Rowley, a priest of the fifteenth century.'—Wright.

[2] Mary, daughter of Charles Churchill, Esq., by Lady Mary, daughter of Sir Robert Walpole.—Wright.

Sandwich escaped on Wednesday but by a plurality of nineteen, and last night the American War survived but by one vote, which will not save its life, for even the vigorous and enterprising young Ellis will not dare to cross the Rubicon, when he has but one man more in his army than is on the opposite shore.

These points premised, I have a very imperfect guess at what will ensue. I expect no real good, much confusion, no doubt. Sandwich, perhaps, will decamp. I should not wonder if Lord North should for the first time think seriously of retiring. Rigby and the Lord Advocate, I am sure, think of staying, for they last night declared themselves *converted*, undoubtedly if the Minority is likely to be converted into a Majority, besides the Lord Advocate, who is stickling to be Treasurer of the Chambers for life, if he should quit his profession to be Treasurer of the Navy too, had not completed his bargain. When scales are very even, a grain will turn them; a dram of reason will produce conviction, when a pound of arguments had had no weight.[1]

If I wrote for an hour, I could furnish you with nothing more than conjectures, which would be very vague. You had better come yourself and look at the hurricane, which will not end in a moment; yet it may. I have no opinion of the conduct of the Generals who have gained ground; nay, though they have learned to fight, they know not how to improve their advantages, and if they should, they will quarrel about the spoil. However, I am clear that it is the present calamitous situation, though it seemed to have made so little impression, that produced the present crisis, aided, indeed, by the treachery of some of the Court, and by the wretched tools it employed. Therefore, though the Opposition should lose the moment, or the Court have address to divide them, the moment will return again, not of *restoring* the constitution (pray have patience, and don't think again of improving it, which would only confound us more), but of opportunities of checking more mischief. That is the most

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, Feb. 24, 1782.

I SEND the 'Ode' as you desire it, yet I must own that somehow or other I do not feel about it as perhaps I ought, when you mean to do it so much honour. The plain truth is I writ it for her Grace's ear and for that only, and as I think the Duke is perfectly right in hesitating, so I on my part would wish to hesitate if I could. I verily believe certain of the house of Cavendish thought it impertinent in me that I presumed to address her, and I have often been sorry that I did, as matters stand. I really think that the Duke's fiat should be had for the publication of my answer, as well as that 'Ode' which occasioned it. And thus having honestly told you my

I expect, but it is impossible to crowd into a letter such an inundation of ideas as present themselves. I see comfort in some light—solid hopes in none. I do see new mischiefs at hand that have not yet disclosed themselves, and which I doubt will destroy us at home without the necessary consequences from all we have lost, and from the situation of our monied affairs; but this is a topic I shall not broach on paper. Adieu! I have not time to add a a word.

2122. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Feb. 23, 1782.

I NEVER remonstrate, Madam, against the behests of Dame Prudence, though a lady I never got acquainted with till near my grand climacteric. I approve of your giving no handle to suspicions; but, is it necessary to banish yourself? Must you be able to prove an alibi? And may not your staying in the country be surmised as calculated for seeing your son more secretly? It avails nothing to cure a jealous mind of one object of distrust—you do not cure it of jealousy. I shall certainly not open my lips on one of your

mind, I leave you to act as you think proper; adding only, that I hitherto have kept the 'Ode' so much a secret, that I never told either Lord or Lady Harcourt a syllable about the matter. I think as highly of Mr. Whitehead's verses as you do, and I wonder that I forgot to mention them.

I should suspect that if everything answers according to the scheme laid, you will in about three weeks from the date of this receive a most wonderful production, entitled 'An Archaeological Epistle' to a certain Editor; but suspend all curiosity and forbear even to hint a syllable of expectation to your dearest friends; profound secrecy is on this more necessary than ever, and there is so much difficulty in managing the matter that perhaps it may be still-born or much mangled in its birth. However, the best precautions are and will be taken about it.

I have with great labour and pain at last completed my Anthem Book for the use of the Church of York, to which I have prefixed a short Essay on Cathedral Music, at which your friend Sir John Hawkins will be hugely offended, and I should not wonder if it produced a controversy. The book itself will not be worth sending you, but I will contrive when the sheets are dry to send you the Essay. I give the impression to our Library here, so it will only be sold on the spot.

I have by no means told you and Lord Harcourt two different stories about my southern expedition. I mean to take London, &c. in my way to Nuneham, and this about the commencement of summer, which I call June, but this plan is not like the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not. I may perhaps come to town much sooner. I don't like George Selwyn's pun about Faro at all. I made a better myself lately, and I will be judged by Lord Harcourt. When the M. de Bouillie had retaken St. Eustatia, I said, alas! I have lived to see the day when French Bouillie is better than English roast beef. Spell the words right before you tell it, &c. Adio.

I mean to go to Aston about a week from the date of this, my address then is near Worsop, Notts.

W. MASON.

ladyship's motives and measures; but as to your fixing a time for coming, and though Lord Ossory says it will be next week, I have little faith; nor shall expect you before the Greek Calends, a certain time of a month in which the Athenian ladies, who never kept their words, used to come to town.

This was all I had to say, for our lord will write to you himself, no doubt, from the field of battle. Perhaps I ought to congratulate you on his being almost victorious; at least, it was a drawn battle, when the enemy had a majority but of one. I confess I expected the Opposition would have lost ground, as I thought Lord Sandwich more unpopular than the war, and that the deserters, as usual, of late, would make their peace by returning to their colours; but it seems I little understand how interest operates on men. It appears that it acts again as it used to do formerly, and conducts its mercenaries to the increasing side: still it is my opinion, though I do not boast of my penetration, that the present face of affairs will produce nothing but new confusion. Though the Court should take panic, or be actually beaten, it will recover its ground. The Opposition will not agree, and one little faction or other will grow, or pretend to grow, more enraged at its competitors, than at the enemy, and will accept the places against their late friends, which they cannot obtain by the acquiescence of those friends.

This, I imagine, will be the case, if it comes to a treaty; but should an alteration and a new administration take place, what can they do, ruined as the country is?—No; I shall tremble for them, not rejoice; especially as their old antagonists turned into an opposition, will be very different opponents, and not conscientious and moderate as they have been. I foresee much more that I will not express; nor will I say more, when it would only be conjecturing. I have no opinion of my own sagacity; and what signifies my guessing what is to happen, when I shall probably see so little of the crowd of events that are coming on? I shall leave my country afloat, struggling for existence, and then in quest of a new constitution, for I do not see a shadow of probability of the old being restored. To that my attachment was, and I care little indeed about any other that will not resemble it. Perhaps this is not the language of a man rejoicing in the success of his friends; but *places* for them was never what I was solicitous about. On one point I do heartily rejoice—the pursuit of the American war must stop; ay, and for a while at least, despotism must pause; and though it may be England's fate at last, it will not be America's.

I beg your ladyship's pardon for talking so much politics—no. I do not; I could talk to no man more capable of understanding them; and it would be impertinent to treat *you* with trifles at such a moment, which made me write, though Lord Ossory is in town; but I have not anticipated what he will tell you. He is too young not to regard triumph as a good: it is the property of sedentary age to balance the different aspects of prospect.

2123. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 25, 1782.

THERE are certain moments in politics which excite eager curiosity, but in which it is least easy to satisfy it. This means a crisis, in which the scales are so nicely balanced as to fluctuate, and consequently to puzzle the prophetic eye even of calculators. On Wednesday last, Mr. Fox renewed the attack on Lord Sandwich, who was saved by a majority but of nineteen. On the next day but one, General Conway moved to address the King to take steps for peace with America. I believe the calculating prophets had been at work with their arithmetic, and had found that when a plurality of twenty-two was sunk to nineteen, it was a decreasing fund; and thence they contributed to make it so—for at two in the morning the majority appeared to be fallen to a single figure. The question was rejected but by *one* voice.

As I do not make use of any table of interest, I shall not pretend to prophesy what will happen. Formerly, a sinking Minister was soon gone; but as circumstances cannot always be the same, no more can times, which take their colour from them. One opinion I have more fixed, which is, that the longer the Administration can maintain itself, the heavier will be its fall; for, as this success of the Opposition is less owing to their abilities than to the calamities of the war, I see no prospect of victories to mend the situation of the Ministers; and therefore, though they may divert their present danger, the temper of the nation, that is much soured, will not sweeten in their favour.

This is a brief sketch of the present aspect. I could not by a million of words tell you more yet. You will understand as much as is necessary, and I do not at all desire to be more intelligible to postmasters.

I have received two letters from you since my last; one, the

moment that was set out. Yours came by Mr. Grenville with the prints of the Medici, for which I give you many thanks. In your second, you say that the Emperor had consented to receive the Pope, from whom he has taken at least a third of his tiara. We had heard that Cæsar added, that his Holiness's visit would be to no manner of purpose. Perhaps the Monarch would not dislike to return the *super Aspidem et Basiliscum calcabis*,—yet he may find an aspic under his feet. There is more than metaphoric poison still left in the vipers of the Church.

Accustomed as you are to our newspapers, you will read in them with astonishment the detail of a late trial for adultery between Sir Richard Worseley and his wife, sister of the Countess of Harrington. To save her last favourite, she summoned thirty-four young men of the first quality to depose to having received her favours; and one of them, a Duke's son, to having bestowed an additional one on her. The number was reduced to twenty-seven, and but few of them were examined; and they blushed for her. A better defence for her was the connivance of the husband, who was proved to have carried one of the troop on his back to the house-top, to view his fair spouse stark naked in the bath. The jury was so equitable as to give the plaintiff but one shilling damages.[1]

This trial happened on the very Friday of the drawn battle in the House of Commons. Sir Richard Worseley was missing; Lord North, inquiring for him, was told the cause of his absence. "Oh," replied the Minister pleasantly, "if all my cuckolds desert, I shall be beaten indeed."

Tuesday night, late.

At my niece, Lady Cadogan's, this evening, I met Mr. Langley, Lord Stormont's secretary; who gave me great pleasure, by telling me that you are made Minister Plenipotentiary. I am glad you are a little richer, when you must be at extraordinary expense; but I am much more delighted that your own merits and zeal have obtained this recompense, and that they are rewarded so speedily. It does honour to the Government too; yet I doubt you will not have the fuller satisfaction of seeing your labours terminated by the success you wish. I feel for those brave unrescued men![2]

[1] The trial took place in the Court of King's Bench, on the 22nd of February, before Lord Chief-Justice Mansfield.—WALPOLE.

[2] Besieged in Fort St Philip, at Minorca.—WALPOLE.

Poor Mr Morrice is not come to town, nor can he come, though he has had an urgent call. Old Lady Brown,[1] who was formerly at Venice, is dead, and has left him for his life an estate of 1500*l.* a-year. I told you how little prospect Cavalier Mozzi has of obtaining assistance from him. It is plain this delay is welcome to my Lord [Orford]; for I have not heard a syllable from his lawyers. I was, indeed, surprised the other day by a letter from his Lordship. It was to desire the favour of me to go and see a large picture that Cipriani has painted for him for the salon at Houghton—a most engaging sight to me, to be sure! Though such a request provoked me, I really believe it was madness and folly dictated it, rather than insult; though the latter is not impossible. I would not trust a pen in my own hand, lest it should be warm; and so have made no manner of answer. He has now bespoken another piece, frantic enough; for the subject is both indecent and shocking. Perhaps you have forgotten the story: it is that of 'Theodore and Honoria,' from Dryden's 'Fables,' where the naked ghost of a scornful mistress is pursued by demons and worried by blood-hounds. The subject, were it endurable, could only be executed by Salvator or Spagnolet. Imagine it attempted by modern artists, who are too feeble to paint anything but fan-mounts!

I believe I never told you, that, since his Lordship sold his collection of pictures, he has taken to design himself, and his scratches are pinned up about the stripped apartments. But I am foolish to repeat instances of his deliriums; though, indeed, the nation is so lunatic, that my nephew is no phenomenon. I saw *your* nephew last night at Gloucester-house, and wonder he did not mention your new appointments; but, indeed, it was but for a moment: nor, in truth, though he is very obliging to me, and though I often see him at our little Court, have I had any conversation with him for a long time. The play there begins late, for everything begins late, everybody arrives late everywhere, and I retire early; for I avoid all public places, and go to no other. A Court-life was never my object, nor would have been my choice for this end of my course, any more than it was for the commencement, though fate has connected both periods with such an attachment; yet trust I have acquired as little of the *esprit des cours* as if I had never been within one. How strange are the accidents of

[1] Margaret Cecil, widow of Sir Robert Brown [died 1760], formerly a merchant at Venice.—WALPOLE.

life! At ten years old I had set my heart on seeing George I., and, being a favourite child, my mother asked leave for me to be presented to him; which to the First Minister's wife was granted, and I was carried by the late Lady Chesterfield to kiss his hand as he went to supper in the Duchess of Kendal's apartment. This was the night but one before he left England the last time; and now, fifty years afterwards, one of his great-grandsons and one of his great-granddaughters are my great-nephew and niece![1] Yet how little had the first part to do with bringing about the second! When one considers these events abstractedly, as I do, the reflection is amusing; it makes the politician's arts trifling and ridiculous: no plan, no foresight, no industry could have ranged or accomplished what mere chance has effected. It would not be less entertaining, if a politician would talk as frankly on the projects he had planned and been disappointed of effecting; but a politician would not look on the *dénouement* with the same indifference.

2124. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 28, 1782.

Not only the American war is checked, but despotism itself is at bay. Out of that sink, the House of Commons, seeds of virtue have sprung up. The Administration was defeated at one this morning by a minor- grown a major- ity of nineteen. Conway was General, and exerted the spirit of a young cadet; every mouth (that is able to open itself to day) sounds his praises. Those mouths who have so long said nothing but *yes*, you may be sure have not recovered their dismay enough to say *no*. Whether Lord North may not by his fall, and by touching his mother dirt recover, I do not pretend to say; I rather hope he will, for I would have those who have made the war make the peace, and then their measure will be full. The Ministers received a less defeat yesterday, too, at the India House, where their saltpetre contract was set aside. The profits of Thompson the contractor were to be but twenty-six out of forty-nine. This and the hoisting Atkinson, a more overgrown contractor still, to be one of the five preferred to the Loan over all the bankers of London, is another flower in that wreath which binds Lord

[1] Compare Walpole's 'Reminiscences,' vol. i. p. xciii.—Cunningham.

North's brows, though with no detriment to its predominant poppies. Two such contracts, and two armies taken in a net, are the ovations and triumphs of this egregious Minister.

Bishop Butler (and I rejoice, therefore) is *debouté* of the Deanery of St. Paul's; it was promised to him. The Chancellor [Thurlow] went to Lord North and asked it; he replied, "Sorry, but it was promised." "Confound your promise! then I will get it somewhere else," and got it.

I yesterday received yours of the 24th; we shall have time to consider about the 'Odes,' for as yet I have heard nothing of the D. of Devon's imprimatur, and as his brother Lord George Henry was married last night to the great heiress of Northampton, there will be no making application again yet. Nay, I have not yet received what Lady Harcourt will contribute, nor could I have leisure at present to attend to the press, having a thousand avocations, though no real business—not political, for I only sit at home and hear what passes, and shall neither go to my neighbour's levee, nor to that in Grosvenor Square, should either be so happy in his own estimation as to attain a *real* one. The Marquis has long had a plaything one. Alas! I too have a plaything Court that takes up some of my time. However, I shall always be so insignificant myself, as to be ready for my own amusements whenever I have leisure for them. Connections make themselves whether one will or not, but nobody can make one be a Minister against one's will, unless one is of as little consequence as [Welbore] Ellis.

I do not even reply to your secret, so much I respect one, but I am sorry you will fall on my poor friend Sir John [Hawkins], who is a most inoffensive and good being. Do not wound harmless simpletons, you who can gibbet convicts of magnitude.

As you do not like George Selwyn's last *bon mot*, and dethrone it for one of your own, which I confess is a good one, I shall presume to send you one of mine, though I sin against my own modesty, and abhor self applause even in the humble guise of a saying. Last week at Princess Amelie's (another of my Courts in miniature), Lady Margaret Compton said she was as poor as Job. "I wonder," said Lady Barrymore, "why people only say *as poor as Job*, and never as rich, for in one part of his life he had great riches." "Yes," said I, "Madam, but then they pronounce his name differently, and call him *Jobb*."

As I calculate that you will be at Aston in two days, I shall

direct this thither, and hope it will stay for you. I have not time for a word more.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, March 10, 1782.

Though nobody can more admire the spirit with which General Conway has conducted himself throughout the great business, nor anybody be more willing to congratulate him and the nation on his success, yet I suppose you and I are agreed that the triumph will be but momentary, and that so far from making any material change either in ministerial men or measures, the nation will continue to be duped, nay, rather insulted much longer, and will take it all patiently. As to either restoring or improving the constitution, which in a former letter you say would only confound us more, that seems now out of the question. What is absolutely gone can never be either improved or restored, and I think you have now full demonstration that what you call and have long called the constitution does not by any means exist; if it does, your father (I speak it with due respect to his memory) told a great fib.

But truce with politics--Sir John Hawkins is even a better subject, because you say he is an inoffensive and good being, and at worst a harmless simpleton. Be it so, though I think he has shown himself petulant and impertinent in several parts of his history, and especially on the subject of honest John Gay; yet I assure you I have taken no further notice of him than the subject I writ upon and the principles I meant to support obliged me to do. I borrowed largely from his farrago, in order to prove the very contrary to that which he adduced his Anecdotes to establish, and acknowledging the debt perhaps I have been yet a little ungrateful to my creditor, but my sarcasms are but few, and not sharp-pointed; yet he, and all the fautors of Old Music, must of necessity be offended at them. The sheets were not dry when I left York, therefore I could not send you them, but 'tis no great matter, they would be but of little if any amusement to you. I wish, rather than hope, that something else will prove more so, but I am very dubious on the matter; a week more I fancy will determine it, and I shall expect your earliest opinion with some impatience.

Mr. George Selwyn's *bon mot* was a bad one I still insist upon it, mine was a better, yours is a better still, but Sheridan's is as you say not only better than a *bon mot*, but equal to anything that was ever said best. I thank you most heartily for it.

I have at length received a letter from Sir Joshua which tells me that his Annotations are finished. I hope to receive them soon, but as they must be printed at the York Press, which works slow though sure, the book cannot come out till next winter. My 'English Garden' corrected and in a smaller form, like my volume of 'Poems,' is already printed, but that also will not be published sooner, as it will wait for a Commentary which a friend of mine (whom you don't know, but I wish you did) Mr. Burgh is writing upon it. You who can keep volumes ready printed back for years, will do it with an ill grace if you rebuke my tardiness. I hear a Mr. Malone is the proto-antagonist of Dean Milles or Mr. Bryant, I know not which, and I suppose Mr. T. Warton will speedily second him. I read your unpublished Letter on that subject over again, and am still more sorry than ever that it is not in general hands. Certainly common sense was never so grossly affronted as it has been on this subject, and you ought to have defended her or his cause (for I will not fix the gender of common sense) publicly. But you will smart for it let me tell you, and very soon be forced to claim kindred, yes and close kindred too, with a personage you little wot of, and will not think yourself much honoured by the relationship. Do I not speak parables?

Wait in silence for the explanation.

Yours, &c.
W. Mason.

2125. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 1, 1782.

You know I deem myself a bad political prophet. I certainly did not expect that the Opposition (no longer the minority) would have such rapid success as to have gained a complete victory already. I wrote to you on Tuesday, that on the Friday preceding they had been beaten but by *one*. On Wednesday last, General Conway renewed his motion for an address of pacification with America, and carried the question by a majority of nineteen. His speech was full of wit, spirit, and severity; and after the debate Mr. Fox complimented him publicly on this second triumph, he also having been the mover of the repeal of the Stamp-Act. In short, he stands in the highest light, and all his fame is unsullied by the slightest suspicion of interested or factious motives in his conduct.

It would be idle in me, who profess want of penetration or intuition into futurity, to tell you what I think will happen; in truth, I could not tell you, if I would, what I foresee. The public certainly, expects some sudden change. I neither do, nor wish it. At present, I think alteration would produce confusion, without any advantage. My reasons it would be useless to detail, for they will have no share in the decision.

I would write these few words, lest your nephew should not; though in reality I have told you nothing. You will just be prepared not to be surprised, whatever shall arrive, as it is a moment which may produce anything. I mean, a change, a partial settlement, a total one, or a re-settlement of the present system; though I should think *that*, or a partial change, the least likely to last. Any one of them will be fortunate if productive of peace; and, at least, nothing that has happened removes that prospect to a greater distance. If I live to see that moment, I shall be happier than I have for some time expected to be. I dare not entertain greater views for my country, for a long season; though nations, like individuals, are not precluded from experiencing any change of fortune.

P.S. When you do not hear from me at such a crisis, be sure that nothing material has happened. We have both seen interministeriums of six weeks.

2126. TO JOHN HENDERSON, ESQ.[1]

Berkeley Square, March 4, 1782.

I AM afraid, dear Sir, that I am not robust enough to bustle through the great crowd that I hope you will have at your benefit; but as I am not deaf, as well as lame, it is very hard that I am not to hear you repeat your *own* verses, which I had rather hear than those of others, though you do more justice to the latter; for your modesty was so great, that if your own had not been excellent, I should not have discovered their merit by your repetition of them. I will certainly search for the book[2] you want, if I have it, the first moment I can go to Strawberry Hill, which I doubt will not be for a week or ten days. I shall be extremely glad to contribute a mite to a poem I like so much; and when we are better acquainted, as I hope we shall be, you will know that I am no flatterer; nor would I do so base an act as to commend verses highly that I thought indifferent. It would be flattery if, never having seen you on the stage but twice, I should tell you that you excel Mr. Garrick. It is very sincere when I protest that I admired your verses extremely, and that I thought him a very indifferent poet, or rather no poet at all. I shall be very impatient to be confirmed in this preference. In the meantime give me leave to thank you for 'The School for Scandal,' for your ticket, and for the real obligation I have to you for saving my scenes from the 'Biographia Dramatica;'[3] but pray do not imagine that I think I have paid all my debts by the enclosed little note.

Your grateful humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Meres's 'Palladis Tamia:' see note at p. 177.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] "We had intended to have given the reader a specimen of it ['The Mysterious Mother']; but having learnt that the sensibility of the author (to whom every respect is due) would be wounded by such an exhibition, we deem ourselves bound to suppress it, however reluctantly.—*Biographia Dramatica*, ed. 1782, vol. ii. p. 249.—CUNNINGHAM.

2127. TO GEORGE HARDINGE, ESQ.

March 8, 1782.

It is very pleasing to receive congratulation from a friend on a friend's success: that success, however, is not so agreeable as the universal esteem allowed to Mr. Conway's character, which not only accompanies his triumph,[1] but I believe contributed to it. To-day, I suppose, all but his character will be reversed; for there must have been a miraculous change if the Philistines do not bear as ample a testimony to their Dagon's honour, as conviction does to that of a virtuous man. In truth, I am far from desiring that the Opposition should prevail yet: the nation is not sufficiently changed, nor awakened enough, and it is sure of having its feelings repeatedly attacked by more woes; the blow will have more effect a little time hence: the clamour must be loud enough to drown the huzzas of five hoarse bodies, the Scotch, Tories, Clergy, Law, and Army, who would soon croak if new Ministers cannot do what the old have made impossible; and therefore, till general distress involves all in complaint, and lays the cause undeniably at the right doors, victory will be but momentary, and the conquerors would soon be rendered more unpopular than the vanquished; for, depend upon it, the present Ministers would not be as decent and as harmless an Opposition as the present. Their criminality must be legally proved and stigmatised, or the pageant itself would soon be restored to essence. Base money will pass till cried down. I wish you may keep your promise of calling upon me better than you have done. Remember, that though *you* have time enough before you, I have not; and, consequently, must be much more impatient for our meeting than you are, as I am, dear Sir, yours most sincerely.

[1] General Conway had, on the 27th of February, distinguished himself in the House of Commons by a motion, "That the farther prosecution of offensive war on the continent of America, for the purpose of reducing the revolted colonies to obedience by force, will be the means of weakening the efforts of this country against her European enemies; tend, under the present circumstances, to increase the mutual enmity so fatal to the interests both of Great Britain and America; and, by preventing a happy reconciliation with that country, to frustrate the earnest desire graciously expressed by his Majesty, to restore the blessings of public tranquillity." This motion was carried by a majority of 234 to 213; upon which the General moved an humble address to his Majesty thereupon, which was carried without a division.—Wright.

2128. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, March 9, 1782.

Though I have scarce time, I must write a line to thank you for the print of Mr. Cowper, and to tell you how ashamed I am that you should have so much attention to me, on the slightest wish I express, when I fear my gratitude is not half so active, though it ought to exceed obligations.

Dr. Farmer has been with me; and though it was but a short visit, he pleased me so much by his easy simplicity and good sense, that I wish for more acquaintance with him.

I do not know whether the Emperor will atone to you for demolishing the cross, by attacking the crescent. The papers say he has declared war with the Turks. He seems to me to be a mountebank who professes curing all diseases. As power is his only panacea, the remedy methinks is worse than the disease. Whether Christianity will be laid aside, I cannot say. As nothing of the spirit is left, the forms, I think, signify very little. Surely it is not an age of morality and principle; does it import whether profligacy is baptized or not? I look to motives, not to professions. I do not approve of convents: but, if Cæsar wants to make soldiers of monks, I detest his reformation, and think that men had better not procreate than commit murder; nay, I believe that monks get more children than soldiers do; but what avail abstracted speculations? Human passions wear the dresses of the times, and carry on the same views, though in different habits. Ambition and interest set up religions or pull them down, as fashion presents a handle; and the conscientious must be content when the mode favours their wishes, or sigh when it does not.

2129. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, March 11, 1782.

Though I begin this letter to-night, I do not know when it will set out; perhaps not before to-morrow sevennight. I do not even know whether I shall not contradict at the end everything I may tell you at the beginning; for the parties in the House of Commons are so equally balanced, that victory vibrates from the one side to the

other every day. Opposition stock fell ten below par last Friday, on questions that tended to remove the Ministers. As three of the four motions were undeniable, the Ministers got rid of them by the previous question, and consequently prevented the fourth, which would have brought home the others to their doors. They carried that question by 226 to 216. The report of another victory, more national, favoured them, though many suspect it was coined on purpose. Admiral Hood was said to have defeated the French fleet, rescued St. Christopher's, and taken the six hundred men that had landed. This would be most fortunate; but it was not confirmed when I left town this morning. In short, I came hither for two days to breathe, and rest my ears from politics, which at such a crisis you may be sure assail them from morning to night: not that I open them voluntarily, you may judge, when I fly hither, though there is to be important matter in the House again to-day, not a syllable of which I shall hear before Wednesday. Lord North is to open his taxes, which probably just now will not be admitted as submissively as of late years: though I suppose they will produce more clamour in a little time than at their birth, when every one who will be affected by them shall begin to apply the grievance to himself, especially as Opposition will naturally paint them in their worst colours. As I shall not go to town to-morrow—one of the two foreign post-days—I could not send this away, were it farther advanced; and on Friday, the other post-day, I shall not know the event time enough to write. The Opposition intend to give battle again on that day, but I do not know what is to be their *cri de guerre;* however, the field will be fought till it will be too late for the post. I am less anxious, as your nephew tells me he writes to you constantly.

The Ministers are certainly run hard; and if they do not make peace with America, or have some great victory, though I do not guess where that is likely to arrive, they will have difficulty to stand their ground. New losses will make their fall more probable, and more dangerous. Minorca, we know, is gone; and we know what other places may follow. The foreign papers will ring with the enormous sum it has cost us to lose America, &c. I saw a letter from abroad last week, which said, that they were amazed so many miscarriages had not overturned the Administration. They may wonder; but, believe me, deprivation would be a feather-bed to what they hear every day—I mean the Ministers. It is a worse service than that of a General. He stands on a rising ground out of cannon-shot, gives his orders, sees his soldiers fall or conquer, and at most

is quit for the disgrace, if he loses the day. In Parliament, all the artillery is pointed at the leaders, who are galled during the combat, and must fight the battle themselves. The troops sit by, are paid beforehand, receive not a knock, and retire to their tents as soon as they have said Yes or No! I wish generals were in the same predicament, and suffered all the wounds. Well! I shall reserve the rest of my paper: I may have matter to fill it.

Saturday, 16*th*.

The Tax-day passed very quietly; however, it was reported and generally believed, that Lord North would resign. Nay, it is known that the Chancellor has been negotiating with Lord Rockingham. Whether too little was offered, or too much demanded, a resolution was taken to try one more engagement. The Opposition were very confident of victory, and not without cause; for, when a flag of truce was hung out, the mercenary troop of Calculators was likely to desert to the side that was most likely to possess the military chest. It is probable that that chest was previously abandoned, to retain them; for the Court, at one this morning, had a majority of nine, though the minority were stronger by ten votes than in the former battle.

I should be very presumptuous, were I to attempt to guess what will happen, when brokers themselves find it so difficult to decide which side has the best of the day. Future historians may dignify the contest with the distinctions of loyalty and patriotism, and I have no doubt but both are engaged; yet I humbly conceive, that, if Potosi lay in the quarters of either army, that corps would gain the victory—perhaps I have given my opinion to a degree; though the vein of ore is not very redundant.

Monday, 18*th*.

Two days and a half (a great while in curiosity's almanac) are passed, and no news of a resumption of negotiation. The Marquis's terms were deemed to trespass on some precious fleurons in the Crown, which, though perhaps new acquisitions, have a finer water than some of the old table diamonds. The camps will therefore probably remain in the field some time longer, though not without skirmishes. At the same time, I do not see that any favourable events are likely to happen on the defensive side. The recovery of St. Christopher's is still in suspense, nor does Hood's advantage seem at all to deserve the name of victory—but I always check myself when I can only conjecture; besides, that in a letter that is to cross the sea, I keep a gag in my pen; for I would not tell France a syllable more than she would know if I never wrote a letter.

Yours, that tells me of your preferment, I have received, and am rejoiced it was so well-timed; for Minorca is gone, and your zeal was handsomely accepted, though unsuccessful.

Tuesday, 19*th*.

I had intended to finish my letter to-day, but have been hindered by company, even till dinner-time, and am not dressed, and am engaged the moment I have dined. Indeed, I have nothing new to add; but, if anything happens before Friday, I will desire your nephew to write; for not having so much curiosity as the town, nor any wish to see any particular person in place, I shall go to Strawberry on Friday for two days, as air and tranquillity are more requisite to me than a collision of parties. Adieu!

2130. TO JOHN HENDERSON, ESQ.[1]

DEAR SIR: *Berkeley Square, March* 14, 178*2*.

I WAS at Strawberry Hill yesterday, and hunted all over my library for 'Palladis Tamia,'[2] the book you wanted, but could not find it. I did not remember having it, nor is it in the catalogue of my books, though that is no certain rule, as I have bought a great many since the catalogue was made, and have neglected to enter them. However, I do believe Mr. Malone is mistaken in thinking I bought a book, of which I have not the least idea, though I do not pretend my memory is so good as it was. I hope this non-possession will not make me forfeit a sight of your poem, by the specimens of which, you did not seem to want assistance from an old author. Will you ask Mr. Malone what the size is of 'Palladis Tamia,' and whether in verse or prose?

I hope I never looked into it, or that it is very bad, since I recollect nothing about it; and, if it is not good, you will have no loss. Still, if you will describe it to me, I will search again.

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2131. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, March 14, 1782.

No, I cannot agree that General Conway's success will have no effect. I do not mean that it will occasion any change of *men*, which

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] The book published by Meres in 1598, on which the commentators rely so much in determining the chronology of Shakespeare's plays. Walpole's copy was sold at the Strawberry Hill Sale.—CUNNINGHAM.

I think could do little good now, but it certainly will check the wild and obstinate prosecution of the American war; and before it can be resumed, the obstinate would not be able to prosecute it, as they will have neither men nor money to send, fleets to transport them, nor any whither to send them. I do agree with you that what is gone cannot be improved, yet what is gone might be restored; I do not say that I think it likely it will, but I am surprised at hearing you quote *my father* against me. How will your committee approve your citing him, whom in their censorial condemnation of friend and foe they have confounded in a sentence with the worst enemies of this country? It does not suit one in whom all praise would seem partiality, to defend his injured character, though his temperate use of power for twenty years, without one instance of extending it, will not prove his abuse of it, any more than his poverty would prove his wealth; yet allow even me to say, that he had one gift that would not have been disserviceable even to Mr. Wyvill himself—that of common sense. My father knew that to govern or serve mankind, it was necessary to understand them, and to lead—not to dictate to them.

When I see you, I can prove to you that there is more foundation for what I say, than I will specify now; but as I never presume to dispute with you, but because I know we mean the same end, and as I never differ with you but with regret and with deference, and with perfect friendship, I will dismiss a subject that is too late to recal, and which I would not mention, if I had not seen the mischiefs that have happened to the best cause in the world by the want of union and mutual condescension. Hereafter I will give you three memorable and fatal instances.

After dinner.

I had written the above this morning and went out. When I came home to dinner I found Mr. Stonhewer had left a message that he could send a letter to you if he had it by six o'clock. I can therefore write more plainly, though I have not time but for a few words.

If it is the general belief that the Administration cannot stand, that belief will advance their fall. Yesterday it was universally said that Lord North would resign,—to-day that he will risk the battle to-morrow. I am glad of that if he is to go, for it will make the Opposition less tractable. Many attempts at negotiation have been and are making. My wish would be that the Ministers might be able to maintain their ground some time longer, for three reasons: Opposition would be more united, new misfortunes would

contribute to exasperate the country, and the country must be more changed against the Court than I doubt it is, before the fall will be heavy enough, before the chief person is subdued enough, before any new set can do any good, and before they can maintain their posts six months. For if they can do no good, if the chief person, the House of Lords, half the country, all the Scotch, the army, the clergy, and the law are against them, will not seven enter into the House than are there already, not worse than the worse spirits present, but the present grown worse, if that is possible! This is the quintessence of my creed; I have not time to detail it.

I did not publish my Letter on Chatterton, because I am sick of most things, and especially of being the subject of talk. I wish to be tranquil and forgotten, and to have leisure for my little space to come, to finish what I have to do. I shall be very sorry, therefore, if your new production[1] hooks me into the question more; however, the tempest is growing so loud that my name will soon be blown away!

I do wish you would come to town. It is not to invite you to a share of the wreck with which I shall concern myself no more than you, but it is my opinion that the nation itself will be a wreck. If not as a patriot, have you no curiosity as a philosopher to survey a huge dismal scene? How can you content yourself with information from scraps of letters and blundered and misrepresented relations in newspapers.

Soame Jenyns has published some new 'Metaphysical Disquisitions.' I have not gotten through half, though a small volume, yet I am persuaded, as I was of his last, that it is *ironie*, though, as he belongs to Lord Hardwicke and the Court, I do not doubt but the University of Oxford will think him as orthodox as foolish Bishop Bagot. You shall judge by one position: he says that no man can believe a future state on the authority of the 'New Testament' without believing a pre-existent state on the same authority. One of his arguments is, that our sufferings here would be unjust if not punishments for previous deeds. Is this orthodox doctrine? He seems to me to act like the present Ministers, who have more than once adopted a question of the Opposition, and loaded it with absurdities in order to throw it out. Can we believe then an omnipotent and all wise Being inflicted punishments, and at the same time

[1] 'Archæological Epistle,' published in 4to., March, 1782.—CUNNINGHAM.

took away from the sufferers all knowledge, all consciousness of the crimes they had committed?

The hour presses, and I must finish, though I have a thousand things more to say; but if ever persuasion were to attend my words, I should wish it were now, when I would tempt you to town. There is a gleam of some good amidst clouds of evils hanging over us—would you be out of the way of contributing a finger towards dispelling them? At least, come and see how the moment is lost or cast away.

I rejoice on Mr. Burgh's intended 'Commentary' on your Garden: such things will survive whatever perishes, and may last till this island is ranked among the nations again.—I have written in such a hurry, I don't know whether you can read me.

2132. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, March 15, 1782.

When I came home last night (after I had sent away my letter) I found your present of an old Cheshire cheese on my table, which I could not send for, as you had not told me the carrier's name. Though I never sup, I could not help eating a whole luncheon of it, and, without compliment, never tasted better. I was diverted too with the pains you had taken to pack it up, which I should have thought an effort beyond your patience; but there is nothing you cannot do from Gardening to preserving the mould of an old cheese. As I am not a glutton by nature, I cannot enjoy it alone; and yet I doubt there is so much of it rotten that few but epicures will relish it. However, the parts that are sound are exquisite, and must be delicious to all who love cheese. They who do not, would be choked with it, it is so strong—yet that is certainly a merit, and will make it keep the longer, and shows with what good cream it was made. I beg your pardon for saying so much on a cheese, but gratitude does not weigh the materials of a present but the intention, and when a gift is perfectly to my taste, as this is, I am more thankful than for a piece of plate whose value consists in its heaviness, and not in the fashion.

I must now jump from the dairy to literature. Soame Jenyns's book is a *chef d'œuvre* of impudent profligacy—at least the seventh chapter on Government and Civil Liberty is so. It contains a direct attack on liberty, and tells the people that they have a right in

turbulent and factious times to call for arbitrary power. This is more direct than even Macpherson, Johnson, or Sir John Dalrymple have gone. The clergy will forgive his undermining the New Testament, if he can give them despotism in its place. I wish you would persuade Mr. Burgh to answer this galley-slave: nobody is more capable, no, nor of confuting his whole book, which is a very small one. It would be useful too to unravel his irony, which is mighty creditable to his patron Lord Hardwicke, that housekeeper to the Church, and of whom one thinks with horror when one recollects, that after driving his brother to despair for accepting the Seals, he and his other brothers are the most servile advocates for a court which the Earl treated Charles [Yorke] with such bitterness for consenting to serve.

2133. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

My best Lord: *March* 17, 1782.

I am such a courtier and trimmer that I beg you to intercede with Lady Harcourt to excuse me from waiting on her this evening; you will suspect it is, that I may meet the Prince of Wales at Lady Hertford's. *That* would be like me, but for once it is a contrary reason. In short, I do not mean to go to Lady Hertford's, and, as I promised I would, she might take it ill if I should be at Lady Harcourt's and not go to her afterwards. Four days in a week royally thrown away, content my appetite for courts, and I will embark no farther till the Chancellor is sent to fetch me. *Then* all my ambition may break out, and I may cease to be Lady Harcourt's and your Lordship's most devoted,

Hor. Walpole.

2134. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 21, 1782.

I told you on Tuesday that I would not write by this post, and was to go out of town to-morrow. You will excuse my breaking a promise that you did not desire me to keep, especially when I have so big a revolution to tell you. Out of town I cannot go, for it has snowed all the evening, nor am I so perfectly incurious as not to like to

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

hear the rumours of the hour; for as to settlement, I believe I might be absent two days and not find it come to a consistence—but I recollect that you do not know what has happened, and may have a little curiosity too.

Well! yesterday, as a repetition of the late motion, somewhat varied, was on the point of being made in the House of Commons, Lord North rose, and declared the whole Administration was dissolved.

You are not to imagine that this declaration was made in consequence of any negotiation, treaty, compromise, or management. Oh, no! all treaty had been broken off; and that puissant Administration, that had swept away everything before it—at home, have laid down their arms without being beaten, and without any conditions. Such a surrender, not imagined even in idea at Christmas, is very novel. Not a month is passed since General Conway's successful motion; not that he is entitled to all the glory. Lord Cornwallis's defeat had certainly opened many eyes, which had been obstinately shut to all our other defeats and losses; and an intriguing faction in the Ministry, who did not foresee the discomfit they were bringing on themselves, had disjointed their combined powers, and given encouragement to the Opposition. When some of the Ministers had declared the recovery of America impossible, others, who had been lulled asleep by that vision, found there was more truth in that revelation than they would believe from opponents. These steps made, Mr. Conway's motion easily found its way. This is a brief, but, I believe, a very true account of what has passed.

For what is to come, I am far from being able to give you as just a view. At four o'clock to-day not the smallest advance had been made towards a new establishment. On that head it is not proper to say more. I shall have eighteen or twenty hours before this goes away to tell you, if anything new finds its way to the public.

In your last you thanked me for the advice I gave your nephew, which he was so wise as to follow, and which proved to have been such good advice. It was not solely given for his own sake. I certainly had *you* in my eye too. But, though my own principles are very determined, no party views have ever, or will, induce me to give insidious counsel to a friend who asks my opinion, nor have I once allowed myself to seduce a son (and I look on your nephew as your son) to act contrary to the inclination and sentiments of his parent; I should think it most dishonourable. When your nephew, two years ago, brought over opinions that I thought would grieve

you, I told him that, though they were conformable to my own, I could not encourage him in them; yet on neither of these occasions did I even hint to you, when it might look like making court to the late Ministers, nor certainly did I act thus *à leur intention*.

Well! I revert to my old wishes and prayers for peace! If that arises out of the present chaos, *benedicite!* England's tranquillity and welfare are all my objects. I care not who the Ministers shall be, provided they do but keep those points in view. My dislike of our late measures was founded on no personal interests; nor, should my nearest friends be again employed, as they were in 1766, shall I be a jot more a gainer than I was then. You were the only person then for whom I asked a single favour—one more than I should ask now. The colour of my life has been disinterested. It shall not be contaminated in its dregs.

22*nd*.

Nothing—nothing at all is settled. To-day's report is, that Lord Shelburne was yesterday two hours with the King. If Lord Shelburne undertakes, who will carry very little strength but ample unpopularity, I shall think him bolder than wise, and will venture for once to foretell, that he will only share in the defeat of his enemies, instead of partaking the victory of his allies. Thus I must leave you in incertitude; but it is no more than we are—if that is any compensation. Adieu!

2135. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, March 21, 1782.

You and I shall now, I think, agree on one great point, as I trust we do on most others: you will allow that the Constitution is not quite gone when the House of Commons in two months overturns an Administration that had taken such deep root. In one word, Lord North, at the head of the mercenaries, laid down his arms yesterday and surrendered at discretion, the Opposition having refused to listen to any overtures till the constitutional preliminaries that they demanded were granted.

This is precisely all I know, not how the surrender was determined; perhaps from the timidity of the Ministers who might see that obstinacy *in the last resort* would draw tenfold danger on their heads. In short, the Royal yacht was expediting at Deptford! Still

I should not wonder if no new arrangement yet took place, provided any of the last set could be hardy enough to rally.

Who are to be the new Ministers? I neither know nor care—I mean from personal attachments. If the new mean and *attempt* well, I hope all the friends to their country will assist and support them, ay, and have patience, for everything cannot be effected at once; nor anything but a restoration of the State Ministers if there is any division amongst the friends of their country. This is what every art will be used to procure: it has been the grand nostrum of the whole system and will be doubly exerted when they have lost the Treasury.

Time I have not to write more did I know more; nor shall I know more than the rest of the town; for no change shall ever make me connected with any Administration, though I will reverence any that retrieves Liberty. I have the comfort of seeing that America may be free if it will. It is the only country that ever had an opportunity of choosing its constitution at once: it may take the best one that ever was, ours, and correct its defects. I have been interrupted again, for everybody is running about the town to hear or tell, and this house is in the way of everybody. But I cannot conclude without thanking you again for your present, which is more to my taste than ever present was. It is high-flavoured to the most exquisite degree; in short, I cannot express a quarter of what I think. I do not know that you ever pleased me more.

Monday, 7 o'clock.

Thank God! Thank God! what remains of this country and constitution may be saved: no art or industry has been employed to divide and break the Opposition. Lord Shelburne has resisted nobly and wisely, and they triumph together. The Court has yielded completely—though not till this morning, when it had not above three hours left to hold out. Yesterday a struggle was made to add Lords Gower and Weymouth to the new Cabinet: even they are given up, and I should think by Lord Weymouth's usual poltroonery. The constitutional points are granted. The new Cabinet are to be Lord Thurlow, Chancellor (*tant pis*); Lord Camden, President; Lord Rockingham, first Lord of the Treasury; Admiral Keppel, of the Admiralty; General Conway, Commander in Chief; Lord Shelburne, and Charles Fox, Secretaries of State, to whom are to be added the Duke of Richmond as Master of the Ordnance, and Lord John Cavendish, as Chancellor of the Exchequer; not a word

has been said of the other places, nor do I care a straw who has them. The Citadel in general is well garrisoned; and as they can not hope for favour they must stand on national ground. I have not time to say a syllable more. I could tell you very curious passages but cannot write them. Pray be reconciled to the House of Commons—I am sure this is not the *Lord's* doing—though it is marvellous in our eyes. Adieu.

2136. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

March 21, 1782.

It was most obliging, Madam, to send me the news, though I happened to be gone to the Princess. I did not, indeed, expect to live to see the Administration demolished. I hope I shall not be mistaken in thinking the moment not ripe for their fall. Their having laid down their arms, before a capitulation made, is a very favourable circumstance; and if their successors are wise, may be turned to good account, if, instead of paying Court for pardon, they take care to be above wanting it. If they imitate the last Ministers, they will make way for them again, and will fall less pitied, and still less deserving pity.

2137. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 23, 1782.

> Thus far our arms have with success been crowned,
> And Rome in tears.

I was in the right; I told you division would be attempted, and so it has been, Lord Rockingham's constitutional demands not proving palatable. On Thursday evening Lord Shelburne was sent for to a house in the Park,[1] and after a parley of three hours, declined; next morning Lord Gower was tried: ditto. At four o'clock to-day, and this is Saturday, no new step had been taken. If the white flag is not hung out this evening or to-morrow, I do not know what may not happen on Monday, nothing that will break your heart or mine. These vain struggles have hampered ten

[1] Queen's House, on the site of which now (1858) stands Buckingham Palace.—Cunningham.

thousand times more: Lord Rockingham may dictate his own terms. The Erse nation is furious at Lord North: Fingal himself [Macpherson] told him, "Remember, my Lord, I do not desert *you*."

George Selwyn said an excellent thing t'other night. Somebody at 'White's' missing Keene and Williams, Lord North's confidants, asked where they were? "Sitting up with the corpse, I suppose," said Selwyn. This was quite in character for him, who has been joked with for loving to see executions and dead bodies.

Mr. Warton's answer to Milles and Bryant is come out. There is good in it, but he does not unfold his arguments sufficiently, and, I think, does not take off one or two of Bryant's strongest arguments. At the end he shows that the Dean has strangely disguised the material affair of blacking the parchments. This I take to be the detection Mr. Nichols announced. It is no wonder that Mr. Warton's answer appeared flat to me, it certainly is not the best answer that has appeared.

If your own curiosity will not lead you to town, it would be in vain for me to solicit you. Folks generally wish they could have lived in historic moments, instead of reading them. There is a double reason for being witness to them, when one can, which is, that they who can be spectators, cannot be readers, for the story is not written till they are dead. It is true, most things are in newspapers now as soon as they happen, but so are ten thousand things that have not happened, and who can winnow them, but on the spot? I pity posterity, who will not be able to discern a thousandth part of the lies of Macpherson and Bate; but I do not pity you who might know better if you pleased. However, I will not scold you so much as you deserve, because I never can praise you a quarter so much as you deserve. Adieu!

P.S. *Vogue la galère! v.* my last.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, March 23, 1782.

I HAVE two letters to thank you for, one by the post and another by a private hand, and I suppose it likely that a third is on the road, as I have not yet heard from yourself anything concerning the decisive event of the 20th. However, I will not wait for that, as I shall not probably have time to answer it to-morrow by the return of the post. I think everything that this poor country has now to hope depends on a thorough sweep. If there be any compromise whatever, I own for myself, I shall expect little permanent good. I wish therefore Lord North had held out longer, that

2138. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 26, 1782.

It is natural for people to conclude, that, when a whole Administration is dissolved, another should be appointed in its room. You

the Opposition by being still more exasperated, had been more firmly united. Other folks I hope will be more firm (I think that is the term when applied as I mean it) and that firmness may answer the same good purpose. I suppose this present week will be more pregnant with important events than any the nation has beheld since 1688; nevertheless, I can very philosophically stay here and satisfy myself with the intelligence sent me by you and a few other good friends.

I am sorry that you and I retain different sentiments concerning the only political measure in which I ever publicly concerned myself. However, I perceive you have candour enough to think, that whatever I have done or may do in that matter proceeds from an upright intention. I mean to go to York in Easter week to our next committee meeting, and indeed had I been in town I should now have thought it necessary to have gone down thither, though a much longer journey, in order to have preserved, what I hope I shall ever preserve, the character of consistency.

I hope to see Soame Jenyns' book soon, and have already intimated to Mr. Burgh your wishes on that head, which I don't doubt he will attend to. Sir Joshua Reynolds has at last sent me his Notes: they are well written, and I think will be of service to the Art. I mean to put them to press when I go to York, so that I hope the whole book will be ready for next winter.

You praise the cheese I sent you so much that I wish

It had been Stilton for your sake;[1]

it was the best however that such a country mouse as I could send you. I fancy though you will find few folks that will relish or even taste it at present, they have better dainties to feast on. I wish however you would make the experiment on Lord Harcourt, who never I believe eat a bit of that sort of rotten cheese in his life, and will turn up his nose at it. Tell him from me it does not stink half so much as a great deal of French cheese which he is so fond of.

In one of my letters I had an account that the Royal yachts are preparing for immediate service. What can this mean? it cannot be news to you, if it is, you may know it from the person who told you that he could forward a letter from you to

Your most obliged servant,
And sincere friend,
W. Mason.

March 24.

P.S. Your expected third letter is arrived, but I must own I cannot impute so much to the House of Commons as you do. They have turned out a Ministry I grant you, but only because that Ministry could not pay up to the expense of a majority; not from any intrinsic power in the Opposition. There are bounds to corruption as to the sea; so far can it go and no further. Those bounds are sooner come at than I expected, for I thought that the nation might have answered even a third loan, which I find is

[1] Swift.—Cunningham.

and I, who have lived longer than the greater part, have seen times when that has not been the case for weeks; but this inter-ministerium has been much shorter. On Wednesday the sentence passed on the late Ministers. On Thursday evening Lord Shelburne was sent for to the Queen's House. What passed has been kept secret; except that he acquainted Lord Rockingham by message that he had not violated their union. Friday and Saturday passed without the public learning any news of an arrangement. On Sunday morning, Lord Shelburne notified to Lord Rockingham, that all his Lordship's constitutional demands were granted, with *carte blanche* for the removal and substitution of persons, and that all that was required was the introduction of Lords Gower and Weymouth into the Cabinet. The Marquis was not pleased at Lord Shelburne's having the honour of being the negotiator, instead of transacting his own business himself; nor could digest a Cabinet in which, if Lord Shelburne should take a devious path, and in which he would command a voice or two more, the majority would not depend on the Prime Minister. The Marquis's friends saw that he was falling into a snare that might have been laid to divide the party; and prevailed, though with great difficulty, to waive the jealousy of the negotiator, but to resist the eccentric recommendation of the two other Lords. On that plan, Lord Rockingham, at six on Sunday evening, accepted the gracious offers, provided such a Cabinet (as he stated in a given List) should be accorded. This answer was transmitted to Lord Shelburne, and by him conveyed accordingly. The time pressed: the House of Commons was to meet on Monday, and were not in a mood to be dallied with. Prudence prevailed, and prevented—no matter now what; all was granted and ceded that Lord Rockingham asked. He accepted; and Mr. Dunning, Lord Shelburne's friend, moved *by authority*, that the House should adjourn till Wednesday, declaring that an arrangement was ready to be made.

Here is the list of the Cabinet—Lord Thurlow to remain Chancellor; Lord Camden, President; Lord Rockingham, First Lord of the Treasury; General Conway, Commander-in-Chief; Admiral Keppel, First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Shelburne and Charles

not the case. I heartily hope that the next Ministry, if it means to proceed on the same plan (and I fear it has not one at present much better) may find some other scheme than loans to amuse an unsullied nation. More news pray! more, more, more, more, more. I prayed to-day (*ex officio*) at church, and I prayed *silently* for *Firmness*.

Fox, Secretaries of State; the Duke of Grafton, Privy Seal; with the Duke of Richmond, Master of the Ordnance; and Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer; to have seats in the Cabinet. This is all I know, and all I shall seek to know. I am totally indifferent about the arrangement of places, and hate details so much, that I am going out of town to avoid discussions and reports.

Well! this revolution is so surprising, and by me so unexpected, that I can only say, with a change in a Scripture phrase, "This is *not* the *Lord's* doing, but the *Commons'*, and it is marvellous in our eyes!" If it produces the two points I have at heart, the recovery of the Constitution (which it appears by this spirit in the House of Commons was not quite gone) and peace, I shall be content, and will never think on politics more. What has a man to do with them who never felt a titillation of ambition? The spirit of liberty alone has made me at any time attend to them; for life without freedom has but a narrower or a wider prison. Honours make one a slave to etiquette, and power to solicitation. A private man who is uncontrouled is emperor of himself. I am going to my country palace, which is the best enjoyment that the greatest monarch knows.

Having dispatched a revolution, I must now trouble you on a private melancholy affair: General Conway has heard from Mrs. Damer, that her aunt Lady William Campbell[1] is much out of order. I immediately advised Mr. Conway to write, and recommend to Mrs. Damer to carry her aunt directly to Florence, where you could be of the greatest comfort and assistance to them, and could best contrive means of sending Lady William home by sea from Leghorn, in as safe a manner as may be at this moment. He has done so, and begs you will be so good as to give Mrs. Damer your advice in this and any other point; especially of a physician, if there is any Dr. Cocchi at Florence. He desires, too, that you will supply her with what money she wants, and draw upon him directly.

St. Kit's has followed Minorca! It is sad: yet let us save the Constitution, and I shall not die broken-hearted. If England is free, and America free, though disunited, the whole earth will not be in vassalage.

[1] Wife of Lord William Campbell, youngest brother of the Duke of Argyll and Lady Ailesbury. Lady William was an American, born in the province of Carolina, of which Lord William had been governor.—WALPOLE.

2139. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 26, 1782.

Most certainly I do not agree with you in thinking, that the House of Commons turned out the late Ministers solely because the latter had not money enough to purchase the former; this I cannot possibly agree to, because I know to the contrary. The House of Commons have that merit; it cannot be denied to them; and it is as true, that the House did this, though the Majority had been bought, and though there was money enough, and enough was offered to buy them over again: but for this time they had virtue enough to reject it, and you are bound as a Divine to accept those who have come in at eleven and three quarters o'clock.

In another point I was quite of your opinion: I wished the contest to last longer, but the victory has been so complete by the other side holding out to eleven and three quarters too, that three months longer could not have added to it. This was owing to Lord Rockingham's own single firmness. He first would not hear of a treaty, till his five national and constitutional points were granted, and at last rejected every reserve, and thus has triumphed without the shadow of a compromise of any sort. This is most religiously true: he deserves all praise and all support; and I do think you will believe me, who think very meanly of his abilities, and have not, nor ever shall have even distant or indirect connection with him, and who have cause to be displeased with him for *more* than personal rudeness to the Duchess of Gloucester; but Princes and Ministers are all alike to me; I will do justice to them indifferently, and prefer my country and its liberty to either and to both.

I do beseech *you*, who love both as well as I do, not to change your opinion, but to act with prudence and temper, and not gratify the public enemies with what they are labouring to effect, disunion among the friends of their country. If the new Ministers disappoint our hopes by their own faults, they deserve no mercy, but let them be tried. They have everything to undo and to do, and remember, that virtue is their only instrument. Mr. Conway wisely and honestly warned them in public, that they must not fight even enemies with the weapon corruption. They must, therefore, be reasoned with, as they must reason with the nation. Good sense

will have weight with a virtuous Administration, if they are not a virtuous one—*Ora pro nobis.*

I am going to Strawberry to repose after this conflict, and to avoid the gossiping of the town on the disposition of plans about which I do not care a straw, nor know one beyond the Cabinet. There are various items of retrospect that I should wish, but which I dare to say will be forgotten or thought obsolete in the multiplicity of greater objects, nor shall I have *voix en chapitre.* Mr. Conway and the Duke of Richmond are the only two with whom I have more than civil intercourse, and that I shall let dwindle with the others, now they are Ministers. In short, I can now go to Strawberry without anxiety.

You ask for more, and more, and more. I could satisfy you, but not in a letter, nor would you believe me easily, though you do not want faith in the sort of things I should tell you. As to promotions and such *misères,* I have told you I do not trouble my head about them. In all probability I shall see much more of my neighbour at Bushy, Lord North, than of any Minister. He is very good company. I cannot be suspected of paying court, which I never did in his power; and though I have a very bad opinion of him as a Minister, he is so totally out of favour as well as out of place, that, methinks, that negative merit has its value.

Wednesday, 27th.

Perhaps everything I have been saying is useless: perhaps it may not signify a rush what our speculative opinions may be. Since I wrote yesterday the former part of this, I doubt whether the panic is not recovered so much, as to intend not to let the new settlement take place at all. I cannot explain further, and desire you to keep this to yourself, but I shall not be surprised if the laying down the arms without any condition was not a feint, an ambuscade of a very serious nature. However, the other side is neither blinded nor off their guard. They see, too, that they have nothing to expect but every possible insincerity and treachery even if allowed to proceed, which, I repeat, I doubt, though the principals are to kiss hands today; but we shall find that there is another House that will want correction much more than that of the Commons. The present temper of the latter should be encouraged, not reviled nor split into different opinions, for its weight alone can bear down that of the other. If I do not speak sense and truth, you will scoff my ideas, and if I do not hereafter convince you that I have acted on your own principles, you will have reason to think me a rascal; I have

dreaded something worse than I have hinted at, though some time ago I did absolutely tell you I had fears. When I see you I will unfold what I cannot give you a glimpse of now, and which will show you that I have acted very differently from what would be believed. Bring this letter with you, and I will unravel all; but nothing was ever less seated than the new Administration is yet; you will, therefore, not be surprised if you hear it is dissolved.

Whatever happens, I shall be overjoyed if Mr. Burgh condescends to adopt my idea: yet I wish a less vanescent stigma than can be affixed by controversy were imprinted on the old servile Buffoon's front—but I must finish and go out.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, March 30, 1782.

THE hint which you give in the last part of your last quadrates (to use a stiff word, for my style is hardly yet come to itself) with my previous fears; I know not however whether I should call them fears when certain hopes are blended with them, for in case what is expected should happen, I think it would end in what would bring matters to more consistency than ever, and therefore I hope full as much as I fear. The chemists will tell you that all heterogeneous mixtures will unite only by strong agitation, and I hardly think there has yet been enough of that to make the gruel thick and slabb. This puts me in mind of a strange blunder which the author of the 'Epistle,' which you so much commend, has made concerning Macbeth's witch. There is no such phrase to be found in all Shakspeare's play, as that of *spilling much more blood;* and the great Mr. Steevens (though an admirer of the poem,[1] and suspected by Dr. Johnson of being the author of it) has found out this unpardonable error. Now if I was acquainted with the real author, I would vindicate him in this manner, that the passage is to be found in Dryden's additions to that play; for I remember very well to have heard these lines on the stage set to good old music by Mathew Lock,—

> He must, he will, he shall spill much more blood,
> And become worse to make his title good.

I have heard also a pleasant story that Dr. Johnson, to whom a present was sent, read the Poem before the Preface, and thinking all that was said there was ironical, pronounced it to be superexcellent; on reading the Preface afterwards he gravely said, "I find the author is no friend of mine; nevertheless, I cannot gainsay his poetical talents."

Now that you are in your Strawberry retreat before strawberries are even in blossom, I think you cannot do better, *en attendant*, than spare a leisure hour in turning once more a commentator, that a certain future edition of later works may not be defective. I mean to set off towards York to-morrow, as soon as *mes Pâques* are here finished. What sort of meeting there will be between the Chancellor of the Exchequer [Lord John Cavendish] and me, I can hardly guess, considering we go on somewhat different business. However, you may depend upon my behaviour both to him and others to be such as shall not justly be deemed offensive, and I have great reason to think, from the temper in which I have found Mr. Duncombe (who called upon me yesterday), and some others of my brethren in iniquity, that all our proceedings will be as temperate as we think them constitutional.

You have a new accession, if you please, to your list of 'Noble Authors' in the Earl

[1] The Archæological Epistle.—CUNNINGHAM.

2140. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, April 1, 1782.

You will be perfectly content with the new Administration; if it can hobble on even for a short time; which, however, I must doubt. The Duke of Richmond is a man after your own heart, and after mine too, though I do not approve of his visions more than of yours, which seem to be the same. But when men have the same ends, I do not quarrel with the means: on the contrary, I am so desirous of union amongst the upright, that I am for acquiescence and temper, as the enemies are still both numerous and potent (potent because numerous), and labouring to sow division which they would enjoy and profit of. There is to be a committee of the House of Commons chosen to examine into its decays, and study a remedy, which when fixed on, the Ministers will support. I may not be accurate in my definition, but this is the purport. If I gave loose to my own speculations, I should say that when a house is tumbling, it will not save it to new furnish one of the apartments, much less when there are people in two other chambers undermining the upholsters.

The Chancellor, it is said, declares against the Constitutional Bills; and will Lord Shelburne cordially promote them? In short, I see such seeds of mischief already sown, and the vanquished are so far from wearing an air of defeat, that I have not the smallest expectance of duration to the new system. The watch-word Republicanism is given out against it, and grievous complaints made of the hardships, violences, and insults put on the Crown. Lord Rockingham was not admitted even to an audience before the moment of his kissing hands, and much resistance, I am told, is made to a large creation of Peers, who might a little balance the household troops in that garrison. The high priests and Scotch

of Effingham, who has just printed a little pamphlet, called an 'Essay on the Nature of a Loan,' which better judges than I am think extremely clear and well written. It was printed at York, and I fancy by this time is to be had at Debrett's. To those who know the man and his conversation, it will be a great curiosity: in my own opinion, he has talents for every thing, did not his way of life make him nothing. I mean to return here in a week's time. If anything in the mean while should occur, a letter will find me at the deanery. With a thousand thanks for all your intelligence, and other favours and partialities, I conclude,

Most truly yours,
W. Mason.

peers countenanced *against* the Ministers, will baffle any good that can be attempted. In the mean time, public distresses will pour in from all quarters, and if peace cannot be attained, I see no prospect of anything but ruin, which if the new Ministers stay, will be imputed to them. But I believe the true authors will soon have an opportunity and the honour of completing their work, reinforced by part of the new Administration, who will not return to opposition if accomplices in blowing up the new settlement; a plan that does not seem to be disguised.

This is enough to say on a transient interlude: it is better, however, than if they had been smiled into hopes of favour. They see how ungracious they are. It is determined that they shall not be pleased with their situation; that they shall be clogged in every attempt to please the country, and, consequently, it is hoped that the country will not be pleased. Of all this they are aware, but they will be wiser than I if they can do what they are hindered from doing, and if they can do what will be expected from them, though they will not be enabled to do it. Thus the way is paved for the return of the old again, and I shall be much surprised if the present Administration receive a quarter's salary; however, that point will be sooner cleared up. If they are permitted to do no good, the same influence can dispossess them again, therefore you will have better evidence than my conjectures. If the country cannot support them, the predominance of the Crown is incontrovertible. It will be beggarly majesty, indeed, considering that almost everything else is gone; but a crown is precious in some eyes, though set with thorns and stripped of its diamonds.

Do not wonder if I write seldomer, for I shall now be much at Strawberry, where I have been three days. I shall know no more than you will see in the papers. I have no connection with anything called a minister more than I had two months ago, except the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Conway, and they have so much to do in their own department, that I shall see very little even of them.

Unpolitically we are alarmed about the caterpillars which threaten us with famine at least. The servants I could employ, and the boys I could hire, have been picking the nests in my grounds these three days. If there are any in your region, you must have the twigs cut off and burnt, with great care not to scatter, for fear of spreading them, and no time is to be lost as they are hatching.

Your favourite Lady Laura is to be married to her cousin Lord

Chewton, an excellent young man, but very poor; still we are all much pleased.

I direct to York, for you said you should be there this week.

2141. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 2, 1782.

Though I wrote to you but last night, I must write again to tell you the extreme satisfaction you have given me by a letter I have just received, in which you say your county will act with temper. Never were temper and wisdom more necessary than at this moment, the only one we may ever have, and in which every devil is at work to divide us, and half Styx at work to calumniate our party and represent us as worse levellers than John of Leyden and his Anabaptists. I should regard the latter with contempt were there no danger of the other. I do, therefore, dread more being exacted and expected from the new Ministers, than will depend on them to perform, clogged with Judases, thwartable by the House of Lords, and standing on no foundation but a *quicksand*. The Duke of Richmond is as firmly yours as you can wish,—in truth, even more than you will like, for his exceeding scrupulousness and abstract notions will, I fear, counteract one *capital point* that I desire as much as you. I cannot explain myself here; you must bring me my letters for many solutions.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer I have not seen since he has been so, nor knew he was going to York but by yours. I have neither attachment to, nor connection with any Ministers, but my two friends, nor shall ever see any of the others. I write from my own opinions and principles, and can have no view but that of serving the cause at my heart; I never shall profit by any Minister or Ministry. I am ready to part with anything, and one day or other you will know my sincerity and disinterestedness, but I scorn ostentation, and am content to do the thing that is right.

I am highly diverted with your story of Johnson; but, like him, I must do justice: I admire him for not retracting his applause. But he surprises me by suspecting Steevens. Nobody else guesses but one author;[1] and when I wonder at their guess, and plead that person's extreme indolence, and how impossible that he should take such pains, they cry, "but who else is capable of writing so well?"

[1] Mason himself, and the 'Archæological Epistle to Dean Milles.'—Cunningham.

is it possible to answer *that* with truth? For the comment you honour me by requiring, I will with pride undertake it, if you accept of me, but I give you notice that I decay every day, inwardly as well as outwardly; nay, I have nothing left but my thumbs that are not lame, and I tremble lest I should soon be quite incapable of using my hands at all. You must send me, or bring me the other comment, for I kept no copy of it, nor remember a syllable of it, nor the style; and I should wish it to be as uniform as I can make it in my present debility, and without repetitions.

Who is Mr. Duncombe? Consider how few persons I see, and how little I know beyond my own sphere. All my labours tend to preserve union, that if the present system blows up, as I apprehend it will, a respectable force may remain together, or our victory has destroyed us. Charles Fox has acted a manly and most sensible part; and said the most necessary thing where it was most requisite; but this is one of the things to be explained hereafter. I wish you had not been so positive, but would have come to town. It is impossible to write all, and what cannot be written is the most essential.

I must add a curious history connected with our present politics, and only for your own ear, as I would by no means hurt the person concerned. When I attended the theatre about Mr. Jephson's play, Mr. Harris asked me, I thought accidentally, what I thought of Mr. Bentley's Harlequinade, 'The Wishes.' I commended it to the skies as it deserved. Shortly after I received a letter from the author, reciting what I had said to Mr. Harris, telling me it was to be revived, and desiring leave, with many compliments on my *excellent* taste and judgment, to send it to me for revisal. I replied *bonnement*, that I had said what I thought, and what I always had said, and with no idea of its being repeated to him; and I consented to receive the copy, at the same time telling him the faults I recollected, and which I intended to mark for correction. Judge of my astonishment when I found some admirable scenes totally omitted, many of the best traits of wit, that I have often repeated, cashiered, and the whole interlarded and converted into the most gross, most illiberal, and most vulgar libel on the Opposition, and in particular on the City of London! It is true that, affecting impartiality, there were some strokes levelled at the Ministers, but which they would well have forgiven, for the satire fell chiefly on their pusillanimity for not having hanged their chief opponents as traitors, rebels, spies and confederates of France. It is also true that amidst this Billings-

gate there was humour that made me laugh. I instantly lapped up the packet, told the author that he had totally spoiled his piece, and that I could not possibly have anything to do with a composition of that sort. Mr. Harris came to me again. I cut him short, and asked him how he could imagine I would be concerned in abuse on my friends. Well! the piece was announced, and the road strewed with garlands; but behold the Administration was defeated!—the palm-branches gathered up, and the piece withdrawn. On Friday, as I went to Strawberry, I saw Mr. Harris at his own door at Knightsbridge: I stopped, and smiled, and said, "So, Sir, 'The Wishes' are withdrawn." "Lord, Sir," said he, "we should have had the house pulled down."

I must so far justify Mr. Bentley, that I am persuaded there was more sincere zeal than interest in this outrageous invective. He always was (not by education certainly) a Tory by principle; even when he lived at Strawberry, we frequently had disputes then.

Do not mention this story, for his Play may appear hereafter, and he wants the profits from it. Should there be tolerable times, he nor the manager will risk the ribaldry. If there are not, it will be thickened, and will suit the Augustan Age in which it will appear, while the author, like those of 'Hudibras' and of 'Absalom and Achitophel,' will have prostituted their talents for a butt of sack and a wretched stipend ill paid. Adieu![1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, April 6, 1782.

I THANK you for your last two letters, the former of which was of good service, as I ventured to report out of it (but without naming my correspondent) the piece of news concerning that committee, which was to meet to examine into the decays, &c., which I found highly acceptable to all who heard it.

I now send you our resolutions, which I hope you will think as temperate as any that could be made without totally giving up the object for which we are associated; for you will see in the third that we do not, at present, *i.e.*, at our General County Meeting, which cannot be before next Christmas, mean to push more than one of our objects; the shortening the duration of Parliament being not there mentioned, and for the other, which we do mean to push, I believe we have a majority of the present Cabinet in its favour.

My fears forewent your former letter, for I thought I perceived, from a short parenthesis in an account which Lord John gave to the Dean and I of the manner in which the change came about, that the seeds of jealousy, which a certain great personage had not sown, but watered, were sprouting; and this I dread more than any machinations of the fallen party.

The inclosed account gives you only the proceedings of Thursday. Yesterday we did little more than fix the day of our adjournment, which is the 31st of October. I moved a resolution to this purpose, that in case any manœuvres of the late corrupt Ministry, or their tools and adherents, should so far succeed as to break the present arrangement of that Administration in which we have justly put so much confidence,

2142. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Saturday night, late, April, 1782.

I HAVE so overwhelmed you with letters lately, that this shall be a very short one; but when you have pleased me, I must tell you so. I met Lord John Cavendish this evening at Gloucester House; he told me how obligingly you had behaved to him, and how wise and temperate your resolutions had been; you have done all I wished, which was to allow time for trial. If new Ministers act like the old they deserve no favour, and, of all men, I shall not be their apologist. Their own sense, I should think, would tell them that they can never be favourites were they desirous, for the last have made it impossible for any successors to merit equal grace. We have neither dominions, money, nor credit enough to sacrifice on the altar of flattery to render the idol so propitious as it was to the predecessors. If these sincerely attempt reparation, *and continue united,* their labours may produce some good, and that good and those effects may maintain them. To those reflections I leave them: I shall neither be of their councils nor council for them, if they prove not what they ought to be.

I wish it was possible to give you a full account of a tragedy that has just been lent to me; an adequate one is totally impossible. The Bishop-Count of Bristol, whom I met t'other night at Mrs. Delany's, desired to send me a play, that he confessed he thought equal to the noblest flights of Shakspeare. Such an honour was not to be

that then the sub-committee should call us together again on the shortest notice, in order that a general meeting of the county might be called immediately to take every efficacious step (within the bounds of legality) to support the men and measures, which we had already declared that we only put confidence in, for the support of our liberty and property, &c.; but this resolution was thought to convey a doubt of the permanency of the present system, and therefore we adjourned to the above day, "subject, however, to an earlier call of any five of our members."

To change the subject, let me tell you that you never used a weaker argument in your life than that of the indolence of a certain author. The case in which you urged it admits more indolence than any other; the idlest cook-maid in the kingdom may make a pudding if any of her fellow *sarvants* will pick the plums and make them ready to mix with the batter: she has nothing to do then, but stir them about and tie them tight in the pudding-bag.

So no more at present from

Your sinceare frind till dethe,

CATHERINE CULLINDAR.

Your story from the playhouse is a curious one. I suppose I have scaped a scowring, for I guess the flirts at my poor Greek chorus would have been retained, for tney were really excellent: I shall keep the secret.

refused. Arrived the thickest of quartos, full as the egg of an ostrich; with great difficulty I got through it in two days. It is on the story of Lord Russell.[1] John Lilburne himself could not have more whig-zeal. The style, extremely deficient in grammar, is flogged up to more extravagant rants than Statius's or Claudian's, with a due proportion of tumbles into the kennel. The Devils and damnation supply every curse with brimstone, and Hell's sublime is coupled with Newgate, St. James's, and Stock's market; every scene is detached, and each as long as an act; and every one might be omitted without interrupting the action—for plot or conduct there is none. Jefferies and Father Petre open the drama, and scourge one another up to the blackest pitch of iniquity. They are relieved by Algernon Sidney and Lord Howard; the first rants like a madman and damns the other to the pit of hell. Lady Russell is not a whit less termagant. The good Earl of Bedford, on the contrary, is as patient as Job, and forgets the danger of his son to listen to the pathetic narrative of his old steward, whose wife had been Lord Russell's nurse, and died at seeing him sent to the Tower. The second act begins, and never ends, with Lord Bedford's visit to Newgate, where he gives money to the gaoler for leave to see his son. The gaoler chouses him, calls him Emperor of Newgate, and promises to support his dignity by every act of royal tyranny; compares himself to Salmoneus, and talks of Nabobs, Stock's Alley, and Whitfield. Lord Russell comes to the grate, gives more money equally in vain. At last the monarch-gaoler demands 1000*l.*, Russell promises it: the gaoler tenders a promissory note. Lord Russell takes it to sign, and find it stipulates 7000*l.* and so on. King Charles and the Duke of York enter, quarrel about religion, but agree on cutting Lord Essex's throat, with many such pathetic amœnities. The last act contains the whole trial *verbatim*, with the pleadings of the Attorney and Solicitor Generals; Tillotson and Burnet are called to the prisoner's character—in vain; he is condemned. Lord Bedford falls at the King's feet, begging his son's life; the King tells him he teases him to death, and that he had rather be still in Scotland listening to nine hour's sermons delivered—

> Through the funnel
> Of noses lengthened down into proboscis.

This is the only flower I could retain of so dainty a garland. The

[1] 'Lord Russell,' a Tragedy by the Rev. Dr. Stratford, acted at Drury Lane in August, 1784, by irregular actors, and printed about 1792 for the benefit of the Author's unprovided sister.—CUNNINGHAM.

piece concludes with Lady Russell's swooning on hearing the two strokes of the axe. Now you are a little acquainted with our second Shakspeare! Be assured that I have neither exaggerated in the character given, nor in the account of this tedious but very diverting tragedy; which, as the Earl-Bishop told me, Mr. Cumberland has had a mind to fit to the stage. What a hissing there would be between his ice and this cataract of sulphur! Adieu. I have broken my word and wrote a volume, but my pen was hurried on by the torrent of lava.

P.S. Cumberland himself has just published a lovely book, which will keep cold, though seasoned like his Calypso's potion for Telemachus, *with the hot Hesperian fly* disguised as an *humble* bee, but really a wasp. Like Soame Jenyns's Anodyne, too, it was intended for *better times.*

There is a very sensible confutation of Dean Milles in the 'Monthly Review' for March, which I never heard of till yesterday. Happy for him, if he were only confuted.

P.S. I was going to seal my letter when I received yours, which obliges me to add more last words. Your conduct and measures were still wiser than I had heard in the very short conversation which I had with Lord John [Cavendish] in our *pinchbeck drawing-room.* I approve much your guarding against the late Ministers and their tools; nay, I should not differ with you on shorter Parliaments: I should like five years, and consent to three, never to *annual,* which would be *anarchical.* My great repugnance would be to any alteration of the constitution of the House of Commons. Besides that, the present has retrieved its character and that of parliaments. I am rootedly against touching the construction. Considering that we have no sacred law but precedents, if once we should begin to alter foundations, any evil might be copied thence. I do not defend precedents as such, but as they become sacred. If the nation believed that its liberty was maintained by witchcraft, I would not make an act against sorcery. I therefore tell you honestly, that I am sorry the Duke of Richmond is so eager for his Committee, and that I hope it will not succeed. Indeed, I am persuaded that it will produce nothing but variety of opinion, but they may create division, which is the great object of the great enemy; but enough of that at present. I am sure of my letters you must be sick—well, I shall be little here; I am going to Strawberry that I may hear no more politics.

Whenever my friends are landed I trouble my head no more about them. I have not seen the Duke of Richmond or Mr. Conway this week, the rest I do not intend to see again, so I could learn nothing but of camps or gunpowder, which I defy either of them to make me understand or listen to.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, April 10, 1782.

I HAVE sent by this post to Mr. Stonhewer (under Mr. Fraser's cover at the Secretary's office) my 'Essay on Cathedral Music,' who will convey it to you after he has read it. You will I trust find your friend Sir John touched with a very light hand, and you will find, too, a biographical chart on one page, which single page cost me more trouble than twenty plum-puddings would have done, and is an irrefragable confutation of your aspersion concerning my indolence. I know not whether you will give that page its due applause; but if you do not, Kirkgate, I am sure, will; for my printer holds it a master-piece in the typographical way.

On my return hither I found a letter which I cannot help inclosing to you, as it comes from the brother of a wife,[1] who you know was once so very dear to me, and whose memory will ever sit closest to my heart. I feel when I am doing this, that I am doing what I would not do for myself, yet which, for her sake, I cannot help doing. The place in question is the Storekeeper of the garrison at Hull, and is, I believe, reckoned at two hundred a year. All that is said in the letter is, I believe, strictly true. The old man is upwards of seventy; but, having lost his memory, and being naturally of a strong constitution, may hold out many years, as such persons (who are divested of all mental cares) usually do. The young man, who is about forty, was in trade as a wholesale ironmonger in London; and, about fourteen years ago, finding his business decline, gave it up before he was necessitated so to do, and retired to take care of his father (this was soon after his sister died). On this account, as her small fortune of two thousand pounds was in the father's hands, I let it remain there, and the family have since enjoyed it, as I never permitted him to pay me any interest, keeping only the son's bond for the principal, that in case of any failure I might save something for his two children. In my Will I have cancelled the bond itself. I mention this, merely to show you the state of the family, and how eligible such an exchange would be, could it be procured; for, if the father dies, this two thousand pounds will be almost the son's all. His acquaintance with Lord Orford arose from his seeing him at Hull, when his regiment was there quartered. Thus, having told my story, I leave it to you whether it may be proper for you to mention it to the Duke of Richmond. I press nothing, and only beg to plead my first motive for mentioning the matter to you, as what I know your own heart will tell you is an excuse.

[1] Maria Sherman, on whom he wrote the beautiful epitaph placed upon her monument in Bristol Cathedral. Gray added an exquisite touch or two, and William Whitehead suggested an alteration:

"I see that they have put Mason's epitaph in the newspapers, and that he has not altered the two exceptionable lines. The Lover prevailed over the Critic. I should have preferred the plainness of the following lines:

Bid her be chaste, be innocent like Thee;
Bid her in Duty's sphere as meekly move;
Bid her, though Fair, from Vanity be free;
Be firm in Friendship, and be fond in Love.

But perhaps I am as partial to my alteration as he is to his original stanza."—*W. Whitehead to Lord Nuneham, 4th Oct.*, 1768 (MS.)—CUNNINGHAM.

2143. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, April 7, 1782.

As you have received my letters on the total revolution in the Ministry, you will not be surprised that we have been occupied by that event, and have not run, as you expected, into great heats on the loss of Minorca. It has, indeed, made no more impression than

If this friendly application fails, I shall not make (nor indeed have I a method of making) any other. I will say no more than that I am

Yours most truly,
W. Mason.

P.S. The post, for which I had prepared this letter to go in its return from Sheffield this evening, brought me yours from Worsop before I had sealed it. I will therefore tell you what great pleasure it gave me to find that you so much approve of our Resolutions at the last York Meeting. For my own part, I think that our original idea of an additional number of county members is only defensible on that argument which now leads the Administration to introduce fifteen new Peers into the House of Lords. I need enter no more in detail with you than to say, that both are meant to throw a weight into the scale of integrity, against its opposite of corruption. Take away venal boroughs from one House, and Bishops and Scotch Peers (their votes at least) from the other, and then there will be no occasion either for more knights or more peers: and so ends my catechism.

On reviewing my letter as well as my postscript, I cannot help reflecting with chagrin what an ill return I make you, by a sort of petitionary tale about a store-keeper's place at Hull, in answer to your golden-historico-dramatico-legend (I don't mean lie) of my Lord Earl Bishop. I was once his Shakspeare or Milton, or both; but now, alas! Mister, or Monsieur, or Signor Sherlock (for I am told he is both French, English, and Italian in print) wears not only my laurels, but has over-topt me in the hot-bed of his Lordship's friendship, in which, about thirty years ago, I was a very sightly plant; for I take for granted the drama you so delightfully describe is the said abbé's, abbaté's, or parson's production: what a falling off were here, did not the alliteration round the period! Pray let me advise you, though you forgot who Mr. Duncombe was (our county member, whom the Association chose instead of Lascelles), not to forget, that when you write to a friend in the country about new books, to mention their titles at least, and not to call them lovely books, &c., so that one cannot send for them by the carrier. In the case of Cumberland's, this perhaps is excusable; but you served me so about Soame Jenyns, and a hundred more.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Dear Sir, *Aston, April* 11, 1782.

Since I writ yesterday I have seen Mr. Sherman, who brings this to London; but who, at my instance, will not trouble you with any personal application. But I write this by him to rectify two mistakes in my last: 1st, that the place in question is only one hundred a year; and the other, that he has not done his father's duty more than eight years. The former of these it is of the greatest consequence to set right, for an obvious reason; but both proceeded from my own mistake. In great haste,

Most truly yours,
W. Mason.

if the King had lost his pocket-handkerchief. We are like the fish-woman, who, being reproached with the cruelty of skinning eels alive, replied, "Ah, poor things, they be used to it!" She mistook her own habitude for theirs. We are at once so dissipated and so accustomed to misfortunes, that, though flayed to the bone, we forget the amputation of a finger in a moment. Were the new arrangement completed, I believe it would cause no more sensation than the capture of an island. As yet, everybody is asking, "Who is to have this place, and who that? who are the new peers?" For Minorca, we are satisfied with the encomiums showered on General Murray by the Duc de Crillon; we know poor Draper was mad—and we have no further curiosity.

The country and city seem to be pleased with the change; yet moderately too. The disgraced are extremely angry, and I dare to say will show their resentment in due time; but as only some of the greater, and a very few of the lesser posts are yet disposed of, they who hope to escape in the general massacre take care to hold their tongues; and all will probably lie still, till they see whether the new Ministers are lenient or severe. The recess of Parliament, too, for the holidays, re-elections, and usual jaunts into the country, and the never-to-be-violated festival of Newmarket, have dispersed many. The House of Commons meets to-morrow, and then things will begin to have a complexion. If the new Administration can make a tolerable peace, and carry any popular bills, they may maintain themselves for a time; yet I do not look on the present system as very stable. Bad as the last it would be difficult to be; and as ruinous it cannot be, for we have not half so much to lose as we have lost.

I do not send you lists of changes, for all are not yet made; and, while the undetermined are in suspense, it would be only giving you guesses that would want corrections, or unfounded reports. The genuine alterations you will find in the 'Gazette.' A long catalogue of new peers was expected. Only three have yet kissed hands; Sir Fletcher Norton, Dunning, and Admiral Keppel.

I must now answer yours of March the 19th. In my last, I begged you to assist Mrs. Damer in her distress on her aunt's disorder. You would want no spur to good offices there. Lord Orford, I hear, is to be removed from the Rangership of the two Parks. It was intended by the new Ministers to leave him in the King's Bed-chamber; which out of respect they did not mean to touch. Whether his dismission from the former post had been notified to

him or not, I cannot tell. I should think it had; for he has sent his resignation of the Bedchamber also, though saying it is on account of his lameness. He has long had a very swelled leg, which I suppose balances or drains his head, and prevents it from quite oversetting again. Indeed, as he has been so warm an advocate for the late abominable system, I must a little wonder, if he is angry, that he has palliated the cause of his resignation—but who can argue on a lunatic?

It looks very much as if we should be reconciled with Holland; and, as Russia espouses that temper, I should hope pacification would spread further. How blessed would that moment be! But we have another grievous thorn in our very side! Ireland is little less estranged than America; and a most wicked coxcomb, one Eden, Secretary to the late Lord Lieutenant, has dared to do his utmost to heighten the rupture. As he had not sense or judgment enough to cloak his folly, it has fallen on his own head with general indignation; but, as Irish heads are not better poised, we fear consequences. You will see the detail in the papers, too long for a letter. The late Administration had neglected and inflamed that business, as they have acted in almost every other. Such grievous waste and negligence appear from every office, that it is very doubtful whether they will fall so lightly as they expected. Though they will be very ready to accuse, it may chance that they will be accused first. They have provoked and invited four wars, neglected all, succeeded in none, rejected every overture of peace while tampering for peace, and by profusion and carelessness thrown away the means of making war any longer. As ministers, generals, treasurers, negotiators, they have proved themselves as incapable as any set of men who ever overturned a great country; and in the rapidity of their achievements they have exceeded all. Strange it was that they did not fall sooner! And yet their fall was instantaneous and unforeseen! My sentiments about them have been uniform. I restrain rather than exaggerate them. Every country in which we are concerned testifies to the truth of what I say. I reap no advantage from their fall, nor shall; fully content if peace is restored, and as much as can be of our Constitution, credit, and felicity. Adieu!

2144. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

April 13, 1782.

Your partiality to me, my good Sir, is much overseen, if you think me fit to correct your Latin. Alas! I have not skimmed ten pages of Latin these dozen years. I have dealt in nothing but English, French, and a little Italian; and do not think, if my life depended on it, I could write four lines of pure Latin. I have had occasion once or twice to speak that language, and soon found that all my verbs were Italian with Roman terminations. I would not on any account draw you into a scrape, by depending on my skill in what I have half forgotten. But you are in the metropolis of Latium. If you distrust your own knowledge, which I do not, especially from the specimen you have sent me, surely you must have good critics at your elbow to consult.

In truth, I do not love Roman inscriptions in lieu of our own language, though, if anywhere, proper in an University; neither can I approve writing what the Romans themselves would not understand. What does it avail to give a Latin tail to a Guildhall? Though the word used by moderns, would *major* convey to Cicero the idea of a *mayor?* *Architectus*, I believe, is the right word; but I doubt whether *veteris jam perantiquæ* is classic for a dilapidated building—but do not depend on me; consult some better judges.[1]

Though I am glad of the late *revolution*,[2] a word for which I have great reverence, I shall certainly not dispute with you thereon. I abhor exultation. If the change produces peace, I shall make a bonfire in my heart. Personal interest I have none; you and I shall certainly never profit by the politics to which we are attached. The 'Archæologic Epistle' I admire exceedingly, though I am sorry it attacks Mr. Bryant, whom I love and respect. The Dean is so absurd an oaf, that he deserves to be ridiculed. Is anything more hyperbolic than his preferences of Rowley to Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton? Whether Rowley or Chatterton was the author, are the poems in any degree comparable to those authors? is not a ridiculous author an object of ridicule? I do not even

[1] Cole had sent a Latin inscription for the new Guildhall at Cambridge, built from the designs of James Essex, architect.—Cunningham.

[2] The resignation of Lord North, and formation of the Rockingham administration.—Wright.

guess at your meaning in your conclusive paragraph on that subject: Dictionary-writer I suppose alludes to Johnson; but surely you do not equal the compiler of a dictionary to a genuine poet? Is a brickmaker on a level with Mr. Essex? Nor can I hold that exquisite wit and satire are Billingsgate; if they were, Milles and Johnson would be able to write an answer to the 'Epistle.' I do as little guess whom you mean that got a pension by Toryism: if Johnson too, he got a pension for having abused pensioners, and yet took one himself, which was contemptible enough. Still less know I who preferred opposition to principles, which is not a very common case; whoever it was, as Pope says,

> The way he took was strangely round about.

With Mr. Chamberlayne[1] I was very little acquainted, nor ever saw him six times in my life. It was with Lord Walpole's branch he was intimate, and to whose eldest son Mr. Chamberlayne had been tutor. This poor gentleman had a most excellent character universally, and has been more feelingly regretted than almost any man I ever knew. This is all I am able to tell you.

I forgot to say, I am also in the dark as to the person you guess for the author of the [Archæologic] 'Epistle.' It cannot be the same person to whom it is generally attributed; who certainly neither has a pension nor has deserted his principles, nor has reason to be jealous of those he laughed at; for their abilities are far below his. I do not mean that it is his, but is attributed to him. It was sent to me, nor did I ever see a line of it till I read it in print. In one respect it is most credible to be his; for there are not two such inimitable poets in England. I smiled on reading it, and said to myself, "Dr. Glynn is well off to have escaped!" His language indeed about me has been Billingsgate; but peace be to his and the manes of Rowley, if they have ghosts who never existed. The 'Epistle' has now put an end to that controversy, which was grown so tiresome. I rejoice at having kept my resolution of not writing a word more on that subject. The Dean [Milles] had swollen it to an enormous bladder; the Archæologic poet pricked it with a pin; a sharp one indeed, and it burst. Pray send me a better account of yourself if you can.

[1] Edward Chamberlayne, Esq., recently appointed secretary of the Treasury. He was so overcome by a nervous terror of the responsibility of the office, that he committed suicide, by throwing himself out of a window, on the 6th of April.—Wright.

2145. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, April 13, 1782.

For forty good years I have made it my rule not to ask a favour of any Minister, that he might not think he had a claim on my servility, or call me ungrateful if I did not accept his draft. Of Mr. Conway (when Secretary of State before, and now,) I have asked no favour, because I have too good claim on his friendship not to distress him if he could not grant it, or not to interfere with what he might owe to others. I did not fear his expecting any dirt from me. I have as full confidence in the virtue of the Duke of Richmond, and though I have no strong title to solicit him, the moment I received your letter I wrote to his Grace and enclosed your brother's letter. As this was yesterday evening, and as I have received no answer, I conclude that he is informing himself of the nature of the office, and has not partiality enough for me, which I approve, to promise me blindly what I ask. I told him that you would not more than I pay the compliment of being obliged to most of his associates. I stated the confidence you had placed in his good intentions, though I avowed that I neither approved of his or your desire of touching the construction of the House of Commons; and in short if he grants the boon it will be owing to your merit, not to my intercession.

Apropos to the Duke, I can now tell you by the post something I only hinted at; in short, you Political speculatists have sown such doubts in his very delicate and scrupulous mind, that I wish he does not carry them much further than you would desire. He is so struck with the idea of all men having a right to choose their representatives, that he is averse to the Bill for excluding Contractors (those locusts) from the House of Commons. I knew this long ago, and a melancholy advantage he will give to the enemy if he joins with their iniquitous phalanx. Your friend and Archbishop [Markham] has convened his black colleagues to consult on opposing that most essential bill. None of the bench but St. Asaph [Shipley] and Peterborough [Hinchliffe] were at Lord Rockingham's levee, where I should have concluded they would all have met, but either they are reserved for Opposition to all the constitutional or reforming bills, or have calculated that the life of Cornwallis is worth more

than the duration of this Ministry, or rather they reserve themselves for Opposition because the odds lie on that side.

I also knew that the Duke of Richmond absented himself from Parliament because his friends did not come into the plans relative to the alterations of Parliament; indeed, after Mr. Conway's successful motion, the late Ministers were on the point of being beaten. The Lord Advocate turned the debate, and saved them by urging that Mr. Fox was engaged to support those alterations, which would be so unpalatable to most of the members. I could then only hint these things to you darkly; I mention them to show you, that being on the spot, I saw many inconveniences arising to the cause from too positive adherence to speculations on which it was impossible to unite the many; and therefore if I have appeared too positive myself, you will excuse me, as I did not act from mere opinions of my own. As *to disunite* is the motto of the enemy, *Union* must be ours; or—but I doubt the first is much more practicable than the second.

What do you say to that wicked jackanapes Eden? The bomb he threw, and which, though it fell on his own head, may have perverse consequences, is supposed to have been put into his hands by the fiend Loughborough, with whom he was shut up the whole preceding day.

Cumberland's book is called 'Anecdotes of Spanish Painters.' To show he has been in Spain (of which he boasts, though with little reason) he spells every name (that is not Spanish) as they do; the Fleming Rubens he calls (to Englishmen) *Pedro Pablo* Rubens and Vitruvius *Viturbio*. Two pages are singularly delectable; one of them was luckily criticised this morning in the 'Public Advertiser,' and saves me the trouble of transcribing; the other is a *chef d'œuvre* of proud puppyism. Speaking of subjection of Spain to the Carthaginians, he says, "When Carthage was her mistress it is not easy to conceive a situation more degrading for a noble people than to bear the yoke of *mercantile* republicans, and do homage at the shopboards of upstart demagogues." Would not one think it was a Vere or a Percy that wrote this impertinent condolence, and not a little *commis?* He goes on—"Surely it is in human nature *to prefer* the tyranny of the most absolute despot that ever wore a crown, to the mercenary and imposing insults of a trader. *Who* would not rather appeal to a *court* than a counting-house?" a most worthy ejaculation. This in a free commercial country, and from a petty scribe of office! My grandfather (my mother's father) was a Danish timber-mer-

chant;[1] an honest sensible Whig, and I am very proud of him, as I do believe he would have treated a clerk of Lord Bolingbroke with proper contempt, if he had told him that it was better that all the tradesmen of London should be liable to be sent to the galleys, than that a jack in office should be made to wait in a back-shop.

You are mistaken about Mr. Sherlock, who I confess I think has parts, though you and others whose judgments I honour are of a different opinion. I have seen the real author, and had begun a long account of him but laid it aside to answer you on your commission, but I go to Strawberry to-morrow and will finish it if I have time, for it is curious. I shall return on Tuesday, when I shall be very happy, if I am able, to send you a favourable answer about Mr. Sherman.

2146. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 14, 1782.

I AM shocked at myself for having made sport, though innocently, at the Tragedy of 'Lord Russell,' as I have since seen the author, who is a poor worthy Irish clergyman, his name Stratford, aged about five-and-forty, of great parts, and not a little mad, as Lord Bristol has owned to me. I found Mr. Stratford so modest, so humble, and so ignorant of the world, that I talked to him very frankly, and in the gentlest terms I could use, representing to him the total impossibility of his Play being acted in its present state. I said I reckoned it immoral to flatter any author, in a manner to draw him into exposing himself, &c. He allowed all my objections, which I stated; thanked me with the warmest gratitude, and then broke out on the *magnanimity* of Mr. Cumberland, who had condescended to transcribe his whole Play, and begun to alter it. As that magnanimous doctor is so rank a Tory I was still more surprised.

The poor man told me he had brought his family over, at an expense he could ill afford, to get some of his plays acted, for he has also written four comedies. Methinks my Lord of Bristol-Derry had better have given him some preferment, than let him write himself into a jail, as he probably will. I offered to look over one of his Comedies; the next morning he brought me the first scene of

[1] Compare letter to Mason, Sept. 25, 1771.—CUNNINGHAM.

one, but it is so metaphorical, so ungrammatical, and he has such a brogue that I did not guess at the meaning of one sentence. I was forced to take the book out of his hand and read it myself, when I found a profusion of wit and ideas, similies and metaphors so strangely coupled together in the most heterogeneous bands, that every sentence would require a commentary, and deserves one, though you may judge thence how unfit for the stage. He has no notion of simplicity, character, or nature; nor I believe of comedy itself, for he owned that he had never looked into Congreve or Vanbrugh; but the strange part of all is that in the whole scene there is scarce a verb! all consists of metaphors in apposition and allusions in hints. He laughed when I showed him that there was nothing but substantives and adjectives. Besides these works, he has a poem written long ago in blank verse, on the Battle of Fontenoy, in nine cantos. In this he has not discarded one of the eight parts of speech; there are sublime passages, but little invention or novelty, at least in the specimen that I have seen; and the images are too fierce. This he is going to publish by subscription for present subsistence, and I shall toil to raise some money for him. He formerly printed a translation of the first book of 'Milton' into Greek, and the University of Dublin supervised it for him. He repeated some of the lines to the Bishop of St. Asaph in my room, who admired them, and he quoted Hebrew as glibly; and there the Bishop understood him no more than I did his Greek, which I have quite forgotten. The Duke of Devonshire has got his comedy, and I am sorely afraid the poor man's madness will be a jest instead of a matter of compassion; but I shall at least endeavour to make them pay for laughing at a man that ought to be respected. He cannot bear the name of Johnson, for his paltry acrimony against Milton; in short he is a Whig to the marrow.

Last night before I came out of town, I was at a kind of pastoral opera written by Lady Craven, and acted prettily by her own and other children: you will scold me again for not telling you the title, but in truth I forgot to ask it. There was imagination in it, but not enough to carry off five acts. The Chancellor [Thurlow] was there *en titre d'office*, not as head of the law, but as Cicisbeo to the authoress,—his countenance is so villanous that he looked more like assassin to the Husband. Lady Harcourt said he wanted nothing but a red coat and a black wig to resemble the murderers in 'Macbeth.' The late Premier [North] consoles himself with *bon-mots*. On Tuesday in the House of Commons he sat opposite to the

Treasury-bench: somebody said, "I see, my Lord, you have taken your place;" he replied, "Yes, a place for life." It was better what he said on the first Gazette of the new Administration, "I was abused for lying Gazettes, but there are more lies in this one than in all mine—yesterday his Majesty *was pleased* to appoint the Marquis of Rockingham, the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Charles Fox, &e., &c., &c." It was not a bad answer of Burke to one of the late gang who sneered at Lord Effingham's kissing hands, "Yes, and he is in the very coat in which he was killed at the Riots."

I reserve the rest of my paper for the Duke of Richmond's answer, which I hope to find favourable—on Tuesday.

Tuesday evening.

I am mortified, for I am come to town and have found neither letter nor message from the Duke! however, I cannot interpret it ill—for surely *No* is easily said. Still I am disappointed, for when one breaks a good resolution, one should like to have been obliged immediately, and enabled to notify the favour directly to the person for whom one solicits; at least I had set my heart on such a proceeding towards you. I found the note you sent me by Mr. Sherman; I had not named the value of the place, so it is not necessary to contradict it, nor will I stoop to lessen the worth of what I asked, for as I had great pleasure in breaking my resolution to oblige you, I will not haggle to obtain half of what I thought I asked. I did not hesitate when I thought it double, but it is plain I am not used to be solicitous, when I do not like the least delay, which I think blasts a favour.

2147. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, April 22, 1782.

You will no doubt have guessed the reason why you have not heard from me again on the subject of the commission you gave me. Had I received a favourable answer, I should have been happy to tell you so instantly. Even a refusal I should not have concealed. The truth is, no answer at all has been vouchsafed; you know me too well, I believe, to be surprised at my not applying again; and I flatter myself that you would have been displeased if I had. Nay, do not laugh at me for having imagined, at my age, that there was one man in whom I could place full confidence, who

I could suppose would be the same in power as when out, still I will be just. Perhaps vanity made me mistake civilities for friendship. Perhaps I presumed too much; and though I protest I thought I was not only obliging you but serving the person I solicited by putting it into his power to oblige *you*, it is very possible that I had no right to ask even so small a favour, and so well founded. I stand corrected—I shall never be so arrogant again. Nay, unless I see that person changed in *essentials*, I will not, because he has had no attention for me, conclude that his virtue is shaken by such tinsel trappings as he has attained, and which being so common to the most worthless of his rank, can surely not be flattering to the individual. At least I, who have more pride than most men, should never be proud of what are the appendages to birth and rank, and imply no merit in one's self.

For the trial I have made, be assured I do not repent it; whatever opens one's eyes is useful. It is good to have one's vanity reprimanded, nor can I be sorry to have shown you how zealous I was to oblige *you*, though by the manner in which I feel the rebuff, you may judge how little I am accustomed to ask favours, so little, that this slight will account to you for my not being able to tell you anything more than you may see in the newspapers. I should not have *haunted* the new Ministers—*now* I would as soon step into a cave of scorpions, or connect with the late Ministers. My principles will not alter, whether I am neglected or whether they who professed the same abandon them, nor, unless they do, will I think they do. They have a difficult part to act, and nothing yet promises them any success, so deeply had the last wretches plunged us. The Dutch are haughty, obstinate, or too much in the power of France. Ireland adheres to its point. The combined squadrons of the three hostile nations will amount to fourscore sail in the Channel; ours but to twenty-seven. I do not think that twenty-seven ought to beat eighty, because I concluded I had a claim on one who had long professed great regard for me: nor do I hold the new Ministers accountable for the impotence of a nation that had been made eunuch by their predecessors.

If I knew where to find Mr. Sherman, I would have sent and begged him not to lose his time in town, or if he can find better interest than my own I should be happy to have him succeed. If I were not afraid of mistaking my own wounded pride for his hardship, I should say he was ill-treated; but the first is so natural that I must be on my guard against myself; nor will I be unjust because I have

duped myself, which I do believe I did, in construing great civilities into *tacit* professions, and in thinking the person in question loved me because I was an enthusiast to his virtues. Do not therefore let my blunder prevent Mr. Sherman from seeking better interest.

Mr. Stonhewer has lent me a copy (am I not to have one myself?) of your 'Essay on Church Music.' I was diverted by the only passage I understand, the "Quavers on the generation of the Patriarchs." Sir John Hawkins must have more sense or sensibility than I have, if he is hurt by a single word. I thank you for its not being more striking. He came in an hour ago just as I was finishing it, and I had a mind to show it to him, but I did not. You will not dislike the *sayings* of the time in lieu of the politics. The new Administration is called the *Regency*, as they govern in the place of the King. Lord Effingham, from his strange figure and dress and his two Staffs, as Deputy Earl Marshal and Treasurer of the Household, is called *the Devil on two Sticks*. I look on these sarcasms as buds of a new Opposition. Adieu!

P.S. I forgot to tell you that lately Dr. Percy, the new Bishop of Dromore, told me or rather proved to me a curious anecdote. You know Professor Ferguson denied positively in print that a Highland lad of his house (and in presence of Dr. Blair), recited some of the pretended poems of Ossian in Erse, which I think Dr. Blair has also denied. Dr. Percy has lately found, I believe, on coming to town two letters from Blair, which he had forgotten, about Lord Algernon Percy's board in Ferguson's house; and in both he mentions the fact of the lad's recitation in Ferguson's house and presence. I saw these letters myself, and so did Lord Ossory, the Bishop of St. Asaph [Shipley], and one or two other persons who were with me. "Well," said I, "Mr. Dean, and will you not print these letters to take off the accusation of falsehood from yourself?" He seemed afraid to do so. This timidity sets those Scotch impostors and their cabal in a still worse light than their forgeries, as it shows their persecution of all who oppose them.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, April 24, 1782.

I AM as much obliged to you as if your application had met with immediate success; but I will not yet think that it has failed, and am only sorry that the delay gives you so much anxiety, and fills your imagination with such uncomfortable surmises. For my own part, when I consider that the favour which you asked on my part required no immediate answer, and that if done perhaps a year hence may be

2148. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, April 27, 1782.

You was in the right in your patience, and I extremely in the wrong in losing mine, yet to you alone am I excusable, for I was so eager to serve you in so slight and yet so reasonable a request, that I could not bear to wait even a few days for it. I met the Duke [of Richmond] last night at Lady Aylesbury's; he came up to me with earnestness, begged my pardon for not having answered my letter, but had called twice at my house when I was out of town, which I had not heard. He told me the suit should be granted, but he had stayed to enquire whether Mr. Sherman had executed the business well for his father. Well, I am overjoyed on your account,

done in good time (as it was not to fill a vacancy, but only on a resignation to receive another officer), I can easily impute it to the Duke's more pressing concerns. I have, however, written to Mr. Sherman to use other interest, which I know he has; and by so doing, perhaps, put your better interest more speedily in effect.

I shall to-morrow write you a longer letter by a private hand, which will show you that I, on my part, am always ready to obey your requests, even though in so doing I incur danger of falling into a poetical diarrhœa. Therefore, till to morrow, Adio.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, April 25, 1782.

You cannot have a present, because no persons are to have that favour but such persons as the author is not acquainted with. You must, therefore, watch the papers for a pamphlet with this title, 'The Dean and the Squire; a Political Eclogue, by the author of the Heroic Epistle, &c.' But who say you is the Dean? Not Dean Milles, nor yet Dean Dampier; no, who but Dean Tucker, whose head, I can tell you, jowls very musically against Squire Jenyns.[1] You have here the whole of my secret, and I trust will keep it, so far as the secret should be kept. Lord Harcourt, and a few such, may be entrusted.

I own I have as little hopes of the present Ministry's duration as you can have. That wrong-headed fellow Burke will spoil all, with his nerves and his farcical grimace. There is not a farmer in my parish, but when he reads his speech about the message to the House, but will laugh him to scorn for his absurdity. I have written so much these last four days, in which all that I have now done was begun and completed, that my fingers feel tired.

Yours very faithfuly,
W. Mason.

It rains here incessantly, and the floods are excessive. If it does so with you, I hope it will drown all your caterpillars: we want it not for that purpose.

[1] Mason left a satire in MS., entitled 'The Duchess and the Squire; a Political Eclogue, on the subject of Reform in Parliament;' but Mr. Mitford, who has read it, does not think that its appearance in print would be of advantage either to the poet or the public.—Cunningham.

but what do you think is the consequence?—that I never will ask any favour again. I see I am too proud; I felt the appearance of neglect too fiercely, and never, never will I do my few friends the injury of suspecting them wrongfully. My nature is too hasty for the commerce of the world, and is not corrected by such long acquaintance with it. I knew myself so far that for many years I have dealt little with mankind, and what is the event? Why, here am I with all the warmth of a boy! Oh, I am ashamed of myself! I will go to Strawberry to-morrow for three days and humble myself to the dust.

I have not received what you may trust I long for ['The Dean and the Squire'], but I suppose a private *hand* does not travel so fast as the post. The 'Archæological Epistle' has not a gainsayer. Governor Pownall told me, as a *secret* discovery he had made, that it is certainly by the author of the 'Heroic Epistle.' I have just received a letter from Scotland, in which the writer, Lord Buchan, cites the former with high complacency. I have inundated you lately with so many quires that I shall not add a word to this.

2149. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

May 5, 1782.

I HAVE given the new Administration time to breathe; that is, I did not send you details of removals and preferments, that were the mere business of taking possession, and which affect individuals, not the public, and consequently not you. Since their first entry, the most notifiable event, of that sort too, was the disposition of the Garters, given to one of the Princes, to the Dukes of Richmond and Devonshire, and to Lord Shelburne; the last a little unprecedented, as he is but a recent Irish Earl, and a more recent English Baron. The King had unaccountably reserved four—certainly, not on purpose for the three persons last named! Lord Ashburnham, to whom one had been promised, and who was still more unaccountably saved, as Groom of the Stole, by his Majesty, with the Duke of Montagu, when the new *Regents* left him the choice of two for mercy, has resigned in dudgeon, and not very gratefully; as *two* garters had certainly not been left to the King's nomination. The late success of Admiral Barrington against the equipment from Brest is more substantial gilding, and illustrates the dawn of the new system. I wish I saw any symptoms of peace.

Reformation is begun, and is decorated with the King's name, who has given up many employments in the Court and its purlieus. Other popular bills, that aim at ransoming the House of Commons from its late servility to the Crown, do not pass so glibly. The Chancellor resists them tooth and nail in the other House, and, it is supposed, will not want support from his former associates in due time, nor perhaps from some of his new. These hints will prevent your surprise, should the new machine receive any jolt. There is another public business on the carpet, not connected with politics, that is no small one. Sir Thomas Rumbold, a Nabob, swelled from nothing to a million, is likely to be obliged to disgorge.

A much more important, Ireland, is yet unsettled. It must be settled, and to their own liking. These outlines will help you to a clue through the newspapers—I pretend to no more.

One of the Duchess of Gloucester's daughters is married; the ceremony took place this morning. I am just come from Lady Laura's wedding with her cousin, Lord Chewton,[1] at Gloucester House. The Duke himself gave her away. I am returning thither for the Court at night, when the Duchess receives compliments: but the married pair are gone out of town, though it is the depth of winter. Never was there such a spring! After deluges of rain, we have had an east wind that has half-starved London; as a fleet of colliers cannot get in. Coals were sold yesterday at seven guineas a chaldron; nor is there an entire leaf yet on any tree. Yet I can prove it is past the first of May by a *bon-mot* of George Selwyn that is much in fashion. He called on me that morning (the day the milk-maids and chimney-sweepers dance about with garlands): "We have heard so much lately," said he, "of the *Majesty of the People*, that, meeting the chimney-sweepers with their crowns of gilt paper, I suppose they are taken for the *Princes of the People*, and that this is a Collar-day."[2]

When are you to have the Pope returned on your hands? I hear

[1] George Waldegrave, eldest son of John, third Earl of Waldegrave, whom he succeeded in the title in 1784.—WALPOLE.

[2] The following is Hannah More's version of George's *bon-mot:* "Lord Pembroke came in laughing; I asked what diverted him. He told me he had met George Selwyn, who found himself very much annoyed in the street with chimney-sweeping boys; they were very clamorous, surrounded, daubed, and persecuted him; in short, they would not let him go, till they had forced money from him: at length he made them a low bow, and cried, 'Gentlemen, I have often heard of the *Majesty* of the People; I presume your highnesses are in court mourning.'" *Life*, vol. i. p. 254.—WRIGHT.

the Emperor walled up every door but one of the palace in which he is lodged, and set guards at it.

Your last is of April the 13th. You had not then heard of the Revolution, but was still talking of Minorca; which was totally absorbed in the late change, and has not emerged since, nor do I think it will, at least not from want of matter. Such a revulsion as the late one may stun; it does not compose. Virtue and reformation may give the new Ministers some momentary popularity, but it will not be equally durable with the resentment of the displaced and the cashiered; nor do I take the late crew to be so punctilious as the late Opposition: nor is the nation so very virtuously disposed, as to be genuine admirers of reformation. People must be wondrously changed, if they vote as readily from esteem as they used to do for pay. Esteem is no principle of union. When men are paid, they must vote for what they are bidden to vote. They will have a thousand vagaries when at liberty to vote for what they fancy right or not. The Ministers must continually propose or support popular questions, or even yield to those who are running races of popularity with them; while the advocates for prerogative are crying out against inroads made on it.

All this, I have no doubt, will happen, unless some master-genius gains the ascendant. Mr. Fox alone seems to be such a man. He already shines as greatly in Place as he did in Opposition, though infinitely more difficult a task. He is now as indefatigable as he was idle. He has perfect temper, and not only good-humour but good-nature; and, which is the first quality in a Prime Minister in a free country, has more common sense than any man, with amazing parts, that are neither ostentatious nor affected. Lord North had wit and good-humour, but neither temper, nor feeling, nor activity, nor good-breeding. Lord Chatham was a blazing meteor that scattered war with success, but sunk to nothing in peace. Perhaps I am partial to Charles Fox, because he resembles my father in good-sense—I wish he had his excellent constitution too; yet his application to business may preserve his life, which his former dissipation constantly endangered. Another advantage we have is in Mr. Conway's being at the head of the Army. With him nobody stands in competition. His military knowledge is unquestionably without a rival. His predecessor, Lord Amherst, was as much below all rivals. There is no word for him but downright stupidity. Had five thousand French landed while he commanded, he was totally incapable of preparing or putting in motion the least

opposition. I could tell you facts that would not be believed, though known to every ensign in the army. The fleet will now be united, and want none of its best officers. Lord Sandwich, though certainly a man of abilities, was grown obstinate, peevish, intractable, and was not born for great actions. He loved subtlety and tricks and indirect paths, qualities repugnant to genius. Still, I conclude, as I used to do before the change, let us have peace! We certainly are so far nearer to it, that these Ministers will leave nothing vigorous unattempted while the war lasts. The last neither thought of peace, nor took one proper step towards success in the war. The nation must have been utterly undone, had they remained a year longer in power. They thought their power secure, and really cared about nothing else; and many of them and all their tools and creatures wished for, and talked for, arbitrary power, as a compensation for all our misfortunes and disgraces. Indeed, I tell you the truth. I have seen it and known it long, and have not the smallest private interest in my opinions. From my father's death to my own it will be evident, that I never received a favour for myself from any other Minister of whatever party.

2150. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

May 7, 1782.

If I did not know that you can do just what you will and can write in any and all styles, I should not have expected that you could couch the subtleties of metaphysics in short verse. Nay, you have done so too well, for I doubt whether the general run of readers and Bishops will understand your double-edged irony, it is so closely reasoned. I must have the second part too, for it is incomplete, nor have you lashed the most offensive parts of the Squire's Book, especially the pages 145 and 147. The preface and notes are excellent too, and I thank you particularly for Butler's niche. The certificate will puzzle and perplex. One Baines, I hear, is now thought the author of the 'Archæologic Epistle.' I am persuaded that there will be a controversy, and that some will maintain that the one is by the 'Heroic Epistle' Writer, and others that the 'Squire and Dean' is, while many will go on believing that the latter Dean is Milles, though they do not know how. I wish 'Fresnoy' was ready to increase the perplexity.

The papers will tell you that confusion is already set on foot in

the House of Lords. There is one too who urges on economy in order to drive the new Ministers to make more enemies, and so deprive them of the means of making friends. I do not believe he will find much difficulty in getting rid of most of them. That perhaps would be fortunate should it happen soon, while they are in the bloom of their popularity, and before they have lost none of it and *before they quarrel amongst themselves*, but the last is most likely to arrive first. My own opinion is that there will be great confusion before any permanent settlement. The present system was not intended nor is constituted to last, nor have I a higher idea of the abilities of those who I believe are meant to succeed. The old party will recover their spirits every day, with pretty near one principle of action, while the new will split into petty divisions, and run races of popularity with each other. Perhaps after some struggles and some more revolutions, the whole will subside into the two ancient divisions under the colours of prerogative and liberty: but these may be only my conjectures or visions, and therefore I will tire you with no more of them. A master genius may give a different turn to the whole, but as yet there are so many chiefs, and so few fit to be so, that any system will be lame and hobbling for some time. In truth, I discern but one capable of being the leader.[1] I will not name him, lest you and I should not agree. Adieu!

P.S. Lady Laura and Lord Chewton were married two days ago. You talk of bad weather in your last;—it has lasted here to this instant: there is not a leaf big enough to cover a caterpillar. But we do not seem likely to want any shade. I suppose they who affect to like it, which they will if it is not to be had, will build conservatories to bring their trees forward, to which there will be a double temptation, as coals are risen to enormous price; and though Ministers must court popularity by economy, economy is not a jot more in fashion even amongst the people. Not a Beggar's Civil List but is two or three quarters in arrear: and give the King his due, I question whether he is half so much in debt in proportion as the lowest of his tradesmen.[2]

[1] Conway, of course?—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 8, 1782.

I HAVE thought proper not to break in upon your *petite carême* or Penitentiary three days at Strawberry, with my repetition of thanks, which I sincerely offer you, for the pains and interest you have taken in the affair I petitioned you upon. You

2151. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, May 18 1782.

FORTUNE's weathercock has changed once more in our favour; we were drowning, but now ride again in triumph through the streets of

say that you will never ask a ministerial favour again, and you say well. I, on my part, hope,—I shall say will, for I am sure I shall say it truly,—that I will never solicit you to do so, except for the Deanery of Gloucester for myself, when the present Dean shall be made a Bishop: this is my only exception, and I hope you will admit it to be a reasonable one.

You have by this time, I suppose, received what I sent by a private hand. I would wish you to read 'spirituel' for 'spiritual,' in page 111, and to insert this parenthesis between l. 210 and 211:

(Unless, by Justice to be mumbled,
He's forced to stay like Nabob Rumbold.)

This will appear in the second edition, with an apology for the broadness of some of the jests in imitation of the author of the Walloons.

I hope you will tell me all that you hear (worth hearing) on this occasion, and that you will believe me to be

Your much obliged and grateful servant.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 18, 1782.

THE one Baines, whom you mentioned in your last but one, is an ingenious young Yorkshireman, a student in Gray's-inn, who could not well conceal himself on a prior occasion, because it was absolutely necessary he should revise the press; but in the latter he disguised himself *en militaire*, and managed the matter excellently. I have heard from him lately, and he wants much to know whether that ballad of the Duke of Wharton's, which you have quoted in your 'Noble Authors,' vol. ii. p. 131,

The Duke he drew out half his sword,
The Guard drew out the rest—

be in print or in MS.; if in print, where he can find it? I should be much obliged to you, if you will give him a single line of intelligence on this matter: his address is, to John Baines, Esq., No. 11, Gray's-inn (by the penny-post). I know not why he wants it; but I wish to oblige him, as he has been very useful to me, and may be more so.

I sent up by the last post to my friend Mr. H. Duncombe a grave Ode to Mr. W. Pitt, a kind of Companion to my last to the Naval Officers of Great Britain, which, if he thinks it will be well timed, is to be printed by Dodsley immediately. This will serve to puzzle perhaps better than 'Fresnoy,' was he ready to make his appearance, which he will not be able to do till next winter, for our York press works sure but slowly. But I remember you asked me before, who is Mr. Duncombe?[1] Mr. Duncombe, sir, is our county member, made such by our Yorkshire Association, when we turned out Lascelles. Do not, however, be afraid that this Ode turns much on our principles; a little, indeed, it does, but there is a fling in it at the Protesters, Bathurst, Archbishop

[1] Mason is not alive to Walpole's Association sneer.—CUNNINGHAM.

our capital, the Ocean. Two days ago, we learnt the conquest of the principal Dutch settlement—on Ceylon; and, as we have not many tributary monarchs left, I suppose, shall bully that Emperor, like our predecessors. We expect to be up to the ears in rubies, elephants, cinnamon, and pepper. However, as the House of Commons has at last had the decency to call some of our abominable Nabobs to account, and are going to squeeze Sir Thomas Rumbold's sacks of diamonds and rupees, it is to be hoped that the poor Ceylonists will be plundered less impudently. I am partial to them, having been intimate with them, as the Isle of Serendep, from the days of the 'Arabian Nights.'

But riches and cinnamon are baubles in comparison of glory. To-day we hear that Sir George Rodney has defeated—ay, and taken—Monsieur de Grasse in his own ship, 'La Ville de Paris,' of a hundred and ten guns, three others of seventy-four, one of sixty-four, and sunk another of the line. We have lost three hundred, have seven hundred wounded (whom, alas! a West India climate will not recover), three captains,[1] and Lord Robert Manners, a fine young

of York, Chandos, Paget, against the Bill for providing for Lord Chatham's son, which I think will lead you to excuse the other.

Pray make my most cordial congratulations to Lady Chewton, and deliver her this message verbatim:

"That if I was not too old and too snuffy I should certainly attempt writing her Epithalamium."

If your caterpillars are not drowned ere this, they certainly are of the otter genus; for it is here never fair weather for a quarter of an hour.

You mentioned in a former letter that you thought I had treated your friend Sir John Hawkins mighty civilly. No matter for that. I dare say, if he ever reads my 'Cathedral Essay,' he will answer it: he is much more to be dreaded as a controversialist than any two Deans and a Squire, and a Dr. Johnson, and a whole bench of Bishops, into the bargain.

Yours most truly,
W. Mason.

I hope you have made my most respectful acknowledgments to the Duke of Richmond, which are equally due to him from me, whether Mr. Sherman be found eligible or not.

May 22nd.

P.S. This was to have gone by the last post on Sunday, but was forgot to be sent; since then I have had a letter from Mr. Sherman, who has told me that, by your being so obliging as to forward his father's petition by General Conway to the Duke [of Richmond], the affair was settled in his favour. He is very grateful, and I am, as I ought to be, as much so to you, the General, and the Duke. But he tells me, also, that when he called at your door you could not see him, being ill of a fever. I hope in God this was even less than a fevrette; a fever, I hope of David's coinage, as an honest porter has a right to do on occasion. However, I wish to hear soon that you are really well, even without a recovery.

[1] The three captains, who fell in Rodney's great victory of the 12th of April, 1782,

fellow, only brother of the Duke of Rutland, who died of his wounds on the passage—but not one ship; yet you see the action must have been bloody. Rodney was recalled by the new Admiralty, but recovers from his falls with marvellous agility. The late Ministers are thus robbed of a victory that ought to have been theirs; but the mob do not look into the almanac. The City of Westminster had just nominated our young Cicero, Mr. William Pitt, to replace Sir George as their representative at the next general election; the latter being a little under a cloud from his rapacity at St. Eustatia. Now, Mr. Pitt must exert some oratorical modesty, and beg not to dethrone a hero!

These naval rostra arrived very opportunely to stay our impatience for a victory over the Dutch, which we have expected a good week from Lord Howe's hands—charming victories, if they facilitate peace! We have two negotiators actually at Paris; the principal, Mr. Thomas Grenville, whom you saw so lately. It will be one of Fortune's caprices, if the son of the author of the Stamp Act and of the war is the mediator of peace.

Lest we should be too exalted by these successes, we yesterday drank a cup of humiliation. Both Houses, in very few hours, signed the absolute independence of Ireland. I shall not be surprised if our whole trinity is dissolved, and if Scotland should demand a dissolution of the Union. Strange if she alone does not profit of our distresses. It is very true she was grown more fond of availing herself of our prosperity.

There, there is a better cargo of news than I have sent you for some years!

I have received yours with the melancholy account of Lady William Campbell, and the one enclosed for General Conway. I shall probably see him this evening, for I am confined by a little gout in my foot. I caught a violent cold last week, which turned to a fever and great oppression on my breast. Two bleedings carried off all entirely; but, as I expected, left me this gout in lieu. However, I know better how to manage an English mastiff that I am used to, than a tiger from Afric.

I am concerned for your loss of Patch.[1] He had great merit in my eyes in bringing to light the admirable paintings of Masaccio, so little known out of Florence till his prints disclosed them.

are commemorated in marble in Westminster Abbey, by the chisel of Nollekens. It is a fine monument.—CUNNINGHAM.

[1] An English painter, settled at Florence.—WALPOLE.

As our trophies arrived to-day, I was impatient to seize them for you, but the post set out last night, and will not depart again till Tuesday, by which time I may be able to send you another naval crown. I hate myself for being so like a sportsman, who is going out to hunt, and hopes to be able to make his friend a present of more game; but I doubt we must wade through more destruction to peace. What idiots are mankind to sacrifice themselves to the frantic passions of a few! The slain only pass for rubbish of which the use is destroyed: who thinks on them? I do not quite love your Emperor, though he has demolished convents. I doubt he calculates that the more copulation is encouraged, the more soldiers he shall have.

21*st.*

Lord Howe's victory is not yet hatched; we reckon him in pursuit of the Dutch. The whole town was illuminated to Rodney's health on Saturday night. I was just gone to bed in pain, when a mob, the masters of our ceremonies, knocked outrageously at the door, and would scarce have patience till the servants could put out lights; and till three in the morning there was no sleeping for rockets and squibs. Lord Robert Manners lost one leg and had the other and one arm broken, yet lived three weeks in good spirits till the locked jaw came. How many others of whom one shall not hear, because they were not young Lords!

After dinner.

The Dutch fleet have escaped into the Texel, and Lord Howe is expected back into the Channel.

2152. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, May 24, 1782.

You are always kind to me, dear Sir, in all respects, but I have been forced to recur to a rougher prescription than ass's milk. The pain and oppression on my breast obliged me to be blooded two days together, which removed my cold and fever; but, as I foresaw, left me the gout in their room. I have had it in my left foot and hand for a week, but it is going. This cold is very epidemic. I have at least half-a-dozen nieces and great-nieces confined with it, but it is not dangerous or lasting. I shall send you within this day or two, the new edition of my 'Anecdotes of Painting;' you will find very little new: it is a cheap edition for the use of artists, and that at

least, they who really want the book, and not the curiosity, may have it, without being forced to give the outrageous price at which the Strawberry edition sells, merely because it is rare.

I could assure Mr. Gough, that the Letter on Chatterton cost me very small pains. I had nothing to do but recollect and relate the exact truth. There has been published another piece on it, which I cannot tell whether meant to praise or blame me, so wretchedly is it written; and I have received another anonymous one, dated Oxford (which may be to disguise Cambridge), and which professes to treat me very severely, though stuffed with fulsome compliments. It abuses me for speaking modestly of myself—a fault I hope I shall never mend; avows agreeing with me on the supposition of the poems, which may be a lie, for it is not uncharitable to conclude that an anonymous writer is a liar; acquits me of being at all accessory to the poor lad's catastrophe; and then with most sensitive nerves is shocked to death, and finds me guilty of it, for having, after it happened, dropped, that had he lived he might have fallen into more serious forgeries, though I declare that I never heard that he did. To be sure, no Irishman ever blundered more than to accuse one of an *ex post facto* murder! If this Hibernian casuist is smitten enough with his own miscarriage to preserve it in a magazine phial, I shall certainly not answer it, not even by this couplet, which is suggested:

> So fulsome, yet so captious too, to tell you much it grieves me,
> That though your flattery makes me sick, your peevishness relieves me.

Adieu, my good Sir. Pray inquire for your books, if you do not receive them: they go by the Cambridge Fly.

2153. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, May 25, 1782.

My illness was indeed not an excuse left with the porter to avoid visits but a very serious one, the consequences of which are not yet gone. I caught a violent cold, which fell on my breast and obliged me to be blooded two days together. In course the bleedings brought the gout, and here I am on my couch with both left hand and foot in flannel. I was at the worst when I wished to see Mr. Sherman, but I am content that he and you are so. My cold is an epidemic one; the Duchess [of Gloucester] and all my nieces

are laid up by it. Lady Chewton has been presented, but looked sadly, having been blooded the day before.

As I have the use of but one hand and am reduced very low, I can merely answer your paragraph. I did write a few lines last night to Mr. Baines, that *you* might lose no merit with him, but I could give him no satisfaction. I have utterly forgot every circumstance relative to that ballad.[1] Probably, as I lived in that century, I retained the lines by memory, but whether I did or not I cannot tell now.

I have looked, but do not see your new 'Ode' advertised. I do not care what it is about, I dare to say I shall like it. My present object is to be amused, which few but you can compass. For politics, I am satisfied that the Royalists are routed, and at least they must fight their way back before they can do more positive mischief. I cannot look forwards to what I may not see. I have loved old Lady England very disinterestedly till I am sixty-five. She has now got younger and abler gallants, and must beg she will dispense with my troubling my head any more with her affairs. It is prudent for old folks to take the opportunity of any new era for breaking off instead of tapping every new generation one after another.

They say there is another packet of good news come this morning, and that Sir Samuel Hood has taken two or three more men-of-war. It is surely very pleasant that now one can dare to be glad of success! Three months ago a victory made one expect to be sent to the Bastile, still it is fortunate that Rodney and Hood cannot march their fleet to the door of the House of Commons—if they could!—

After dinner.

The codicil to our victory is true. Hood has taken an eighty and seventy-four, two frigates and a store-ship, all chuck-full of cannon, masts, &c., destined to equip their fleet for the conquest of Jamaica. Rodney is made an English and Hood an Irish peer, Drake a Baronet and Jervis a Knight of the Bath; but all, I doubt, will not compensate the unlucky recall! for you may be sure, if the individuals would be soothed, the faction will not.[2]

[1] About the Duke of Wharton, *ante*, p. 220.—CUNNINGHAM.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, June 2, 1782.

I AM sorry your illness was real, but hope your next will tell me that the gout which followed it has entirely left you.

I received a letter the last post from Lord Harcourt, who speaks of certain obliga-

2154. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, June 1, 1782.

I THANK you much, dear Sir, for your kind intention about Elizabeth of York;[1] but it would be gluttony and rapacity to accept her: I have her already in the picture of her marriage, which was Lady Pomfret's; besides Vertue's print of her, with her husband, son, and daughter-in-law. In truth, I have not room for any more pictures anywhere; yet, without plundering you, or without impoverishing myself, I have supernumerary pictures with which I can furnish your vacancies; but I must get well first to look them out. As yet I cannot walk alone; and my posture as you see makes me write ill. It is impossible to recover in such weather—never was such a sickly time.

I have not yet seen 'Bishop Newton's Life.' I will not give three guineas for what I would not give three-pence, his 'Works;' his 'Life,' I conclude, will be borrowed by all the magazines, and there I shall see it.

I know nothing of *Acciliator*—I have forgotten some of my good Latin, and luckily never knew any bad; having always detested

tions he has lately received from you in a very enigmatical yet very grateful manner; and as I can guess at gratitude better than I can at a riddle, and believe it in this case to be sincere, I find myself inclined to tell you so. Had he been a Bishop instead of an Earl, I should have had a reason, *à fortiori*, for so doing; but as it is, it is surely not so common a thing as not to deserve noticing.

That curmudgeon Dodsley has, I find, printed my 'Ode' in a gigantic type, to swell it out to the price of a shilling, though I ordered it to be printed exactly like my former to the Naval Officers: it makes it look a mere catchpenny. If ever I print any such little matters again, I am resolved to do them at my own expense, and give them to a few friends, from whom the Chronicles and Magazines may steal them.

I find by the papers he [Dodsley] has reprinted your 'Anecdotes,' and made them as much too cheap as my 'Ode' is too dear; but I suppose you interfered in that matter.

I am told that I have had the honour to have my Life printed; not, indeed, by Dr. Johnson, but I fancy by a biographer of the same stamp; for he says I am a Republican. If you have the curiosity to read it, I am told it is in a book called a 'Companion to the Theatre.' You see I am at a sad loss for a topic to write about when I mention such a trifle. I will therefore conclude with thanking you for sending your *no* intelligence, which yet was your best intelligence, to Mr. Baines about the ballad he was in search for.

Believe me, dear sir, yours most heartily,
W. MASON.

[1] A portrait from the Ickworth collection which Cole offered to present to Walpole. —CUNNINGHAM.

monkish barbarism. I have just finished Mr. Pennant's new volume, parts of which amused me; though I knew every syllable that was worth knowing before, for there is not a word of novelty; and it is tiresome his giving such long extracts out of Dugdale and other common books, and telling one long stories about all the most celebrated characters in the English history, besides panegyrics on all who showed him their houses: but the prints are charming; though I cannot conceive why he gave one of the Countess of Cumberland,[1] who never did anything worth memory, but recording the very night on which she conceived.

The 'Fair Circassian' was written by a Mr. Pratt, who has published several works under the name of Courtney Melmoth. The play might have been written by Cumberland, it is bad enough.[2] I did read the latter's coxcombical 'Anecdotes' [of Eminent Painters in Spain], but saw nothing on myself, except mention of my 'Painters.' Pray what is the passage you mean on me or Vertue? Do not write on purpose to answer this, it is not worth while.

2155. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[3]

June 3rd [1782].

I AM much obliged, my dear Lord, for the sight of the Dictionary, as much as I understand. The two articles you pointed out are fine indeed! and how excellent to make the sublime one of *genie* end in a bitter epigram; it is giving the Leviathan a sting that does more execution than his strength. All he says on Operas is just, and yet I am so English, such a modern Englishman, that I had rather *see* an Opera than *hear* it. I am sorry for it, yet the longer one's ears are, and the more like *King* Midas's ears, the worse they hear.

Dr. Maty is very pert and foolish—I must confess it, for I cannot be grateful at the expense of my understanding. Bishop Newton is a greater fool, and as Lord Mansfield was his hero, or made himself so (for he had the MS. some time in his custody), I hope he inserted the panegyric himself. If he did not, he cannot be sick of the smell of paint, as I am.

Your Lordship's ever devoted, &c.

[1] Walpole means not the Countess of Cumberland, but her celebrated daughter Anne Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] 'The Fair Circassian' was produced at Drury Lane, Nov. 27, 1781, and met, says Mr. Genest, "with much greater success than it deserved."—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

2156. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, June 4, 1782.

You are very kind, especially as my gout was not worth the inquiry, being only a codicil to the influenza. I have walked about the room to-day and shall air to-morrow.

I like the colouring of your 'Ode' much, and do not dislike any part of it as you expected; you shall not be made a property of by any printer another time, as my press shall be at your command, unless for anything political. This is not from apprehension of *your* politics, but when I first set up the press, there was a notion that it was intended for that use;[1] on which I vowed and declared it never should be employed either in politics or satire: and I kept so strictly to that resolution, that when I published my 'Defence of General Conway,' I had it printed by Almon, though I avowed it.

The cheap edition of my 'Anecdotes of Painting' is entirely my own direction, and calculated chiefly for the use of Artists, in order to which I omitted the prints, to reduce the price. I had another view too, as there have been but few copies of my editions, collectors (not readers) have pushed their price to an extravagant height. I cannot help their being such fools; but I determined that at least people should not give more for my writings than they are worth, unless they chose it.

I will read the imaginary 'Life of Mr. Mason,' though I seldom do read the romances of the day.

You will be amazed when you hear what Lord Harcourt calls an obligation from me; that is, that he should think it so. You will not be surprised that when he does think so, his excellent heart should overflow. There are reasons why neither he nor I can write it.

We have at last acquired an ally! the *new* kingdom of Ireland have voted us an assistance of twenty thousand seamen. How will Bates or Macpherson continue to ascribe *this* to the late miscreants! They have voted Mr. Grattan 10,000*l.* for a house, and 40,000*l.* more to purchase for him and his descendants an estate of 2000*l.* a year.

[1] Franklyn, the printer of the 'Craftsman,' had been Walpole's tenant at Twickenham.—Cunningham.

Have you seen 'Bishop Newton's Life?' I have only in a Review. You may, perhaps, think it was drawn up by his washerwoman; but it is more probable *mangled* (*v.* the Laundress's Vocabulary: I do not mean *maimed*) by Lord Mansfield himself; at least he had the MS. for some weeks in his possession. It is a most perfect sample of Episcopal and Justiciary Biography, &c.

Prelates will bow, and bless the harpy feast.

Stonhewer has been very ill of the influenza, and Palgrave a little, but we have had two dry days after fifty-three of rain, and begin to wear our rainbow again. Adieu.

2157. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

June 6, 1782.

Postscript to my last.

The Archbishop of Canterbury [Cornwallis] being confined by the gout, the Cardinal of York made the Speech on the Birthday at the head of the Sacred College. He gloried in being admitted to that honour; he spoke with that truth which was their profession, and prayed for the Head of the Church in their public and *secret* devotions. He condoled with his Majesty on many disagreeable things that he had been forced to undergo and must have felt, but he could take upon himself to assure him that he would not be deserted.

N.B. I wrote this down immediately, as it was repeated to me by one of the Bench who heard it. I asked whether My Lord of Canterbury had the gout in his head or stomach, for such a pound of incense looks as if he was dangerously ill. Bishop Hurd must double the dose to Mrs. Hagerdorn *in his secret devotions.*

2158. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1782.

Since the naval triumph in the West Indies, I have had no public event to send you, nor anything else but journals of the epidemic disorder, which has been so universal and so little fatal, that a dozen names would comprise all I know who have escaped it, or died of it. The strangest part of it is, that, though of very short

duration, it has left a weakness or lassitude, of which people find it very difficult to recover. One has had nothing to do but send messages of inquiry after all one's acquaintance; and yet, no servants to send on those messages. The theatres were shut up, the Birth-day [4th June] empty, and the Ball to-night a solitude. My codicil of gout confined me three weeks. I came hither to-day to air myself, though still very lame, and it is so cold that I am writing close to the fire. We are paying the fine of three sultry summers together. I was afraid we should have had too much *fire* too; but we have narrowly escaped a contested election at Westminster. Some of the late Ministers set up the new Lord Hood in the room of the new Lord Rodney; and the new Ministers, not very prudently, I think, named a Sir Cecil Wray, very unknown. Fortunately, Lord Hood's friends declared against his being a candidate.

I do not hear of the peace advancing. They say, the King of France is *obstinate;* which, by courtiers, is always called *firm.* This is unusual: France commonly is the only nation that has sense enough not to persist on an ill-run, but to leave off play, and wait for better luck. However, I have hopes yet. The change of Administration, and the disposition of the new one to grant independence, must please the Americans; and as France, by the demolition of De Grasse's fleet, can send no reinforcements to America, the latter must see that this is the moment to shake off dependence on France as well as on England. The contribution, too, of 20,000 seamen from Ireland must be sorely felt by our enemies.

The old Ministers have begun to revive a little, but have had no cause from success to be proud of their bickerings. Lord North, Lord Loughborough, and Lord Hillsborough have been most severely handled for their flippancies by Charles Fox, the Duke of Richmond, and Lord Shelburne; and all the new measures have been carried far more triumphantly than was expected. Still, I do not doubt but whatever impediments can be thrown in their way, will be: but I am no dealer in futurities.

We expect Mrs. Damer every hour. Mr. Conway and Lady Aylesbury have told me how infinitely sensible they are of your attentions and goodness to Lady William [Campbell].

I shall not go to town till Wednesday, and therefore shall not finish this till Friday, by which time I may have more to say.

Thursday, 13*th*, *London*.

There are letters from France which say that their losses in the West Indies are greater than we know yet. I hate to be hoping that any misfortunes are true; but, fortunately, one's wishes do not add a hair to the scale, except one is a stock-jobber. Such gentry coin disasters, to cheat somebody by sinking the funds without cause. If gospels mended mankind, there should have been a new sermon preached on the Mount, since 'Change Alley was built, and since money-changers were driven out of the Temple over all Europe.

Friday, 14*th*.

Mrs. Damer arrived last night. She looks in better health than when she went, but I cannot say, at all plumper. She said, "Pray, tell Sir Horace how much obliged to him I am; and, do you know," she added, "that he is not only one of the most amiable men in the world, but the most agreeable?" I see that you understood her as well as she does you, for you have given her an antique foot that is the perfection of sculpture. I have not time to add a word more, but that she told me that at Paris the universal language is, that the late change in the English Ministry *est bien malheureux pour la France*.

2159. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, June 13, 1782.

Though it was being ungrateful for your kind note, Madam, I could not bring myself to write when I had nothing to tell you but about myself. What can be said of a lame old creature but that he is still alive? I have been for two days at Strawberry to sleep in the air, which was literally all I could do, for it rained every minute, and, unless I had a pair of Mrs. Noah's clogs, I could not have set my foot out of the ark. I found every mortal at Twickenham as ill as they have been in town. Both Lady Di.'s daughters were in bed, Lady Browne very bad, and Mrs. Clive, I think, in a still worse way. Then it was so cold, I had no inclination to stay. Of my spring delights, lilacs, apple-trees in bloom, and nightingales, the two last are over and the first going. My orange-trees still keep their beds; and for roses, there was not even a white one on the 10th of June (except in the conservatory at Kane Wood),[1] though

[1] A hit at Lord Mansfield's early Jacobite tendency.—Cunningham.

they used to blow as religiously on that day as the Glastonbury thorn. In short, the season seems to sympathise with my decay, as poets say it does with them when their Phillis is absent. I don't believe you found Ampthill very sultry, Madam; you had better return to town like me, and put an erratum at the end of your almanac, *for June read January.* Summer was made to be felt and enjoyed, not to be taken for better for worse like a spouse, in whom one has no pleasure any longer.

I found nothing new in town but a marriage or two, as many deaths, a house-breaking, and a murder—if they are novelties. Lord Lewisham marries his cousin Lady Frances Finch, Lord Aylesford's sister. Lady Grandison is dead at Spa; her body arrived before her death was known; her steward received a letter from Margate from her maid, to say they had got in there with her lady after a disagreeable passage: he went to look for a house for her, and an hour after learnt that it was the corpse. Sir Thomas Frankland's house was broken open last night in Bond Street, close to St. James's Street, though his wife and servants were in town; and as Lady Chewton and her sisters came from the Opera, they saw two officers fighting in Pall Mall, next to Dr. Graham's, and the mob trying to part them. Lord Chewton and some other young men went into the house, and found a Captain Lucas of the Guards bleeding on a couch. It was a quarrel about an E O table, I don't know what. This officer had been struck in the face with a red-hot poker by a drawer, and this morning is dead. So are hundreds of peach and apricot trees of the influenza; but methinks I am writing a letter like the casualties at the end of a reign in 'Baker's Chronicle.' He would have interpreted them into judgments and portents; now they are only common occurrences, and will be forgotten to-morrow, without disturbing civilised society. Religious times breathe a browner horror on everything; philosophers write folios against immoral times; but, when a nation is perfectly well bred and indifferent, no enormities shock anybody; and, when they have made an article in the newspaper, are mentioned no more than the clothes at the last birth-day. I should not have ventured to tell you half my paragraphs, Madam, if you were not a country body of a week's standing.

2160. TO JOHN NICHOLS, ESQ.

SIR: *Berkeley Square, June* 19, 1782.

JUST this moment, on opening your fifth volume of 'Miscellaneous Poems,' I find the translation of Cato's speech into Latin, attributed (by common fame) to Bishop Atterbury. I can most positively assure you, that that translation was the work of Dr. Henry Bland, afterwards Head Master of Eton School, Provost of the College there, and Dean of Durham. I have more than once heard my father Sir Robert Walpole say, that it was he himself who gave that translation to Mr. Addison, who was extremely surprised at the fidelity and beauty of it. It may be worth while, Sir, on some future occasion, to mention this fact in some one of your valuable and curious publications. I am, Sir, with great regard.

2161. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Berkeley Square, June 21, 1782.

IT is no trouble, my good Sir, to write to you, for I am as well recovered as I generally do. I am very sorry you do not, and especially in your hands, as your pleasure and comforts so much depend on them. Age is by no means a burden while it does not subject one to depend on others; when it does, it reconciles one to quitting everything; at least I believe you and I think so, who do not look on solitude as a calamity. I shall go to Strawberry to-morrow, and will, as I might have thought of doing, consult Dugdale and Collins for the Duke of Ireland's inferior titles. Mr. Gough I shall be glad of seeing when I am settled there, which will not be this fortnight.

I think there are but eleven parts of 'Marianne,' and that it breaks off in the nun's story, which promised to be very interesting. Marivaux never finished 'Marianne,' nor the 'Paysan Parvenu' (which was the case too with the younger Crébillon with 'Les Egaremens'). I have seen two bad conclusions of 'Marianne' by other hands.

Mr. Cumberland's *brusquerie* is not worth notice, nor did I remember it. Mr. Pennant's impetuosity you must overlook too; though

I love your delicacy about your friend's memory. Nobody that knows you will suspect you of wanting it; but, in the ocean of books that overflows every day, who will recollect a thousandth part of what is in most of them? By the number of writers one should naturally suppose there were multitudes of readers; but if there are, which I doubt, the latter read only the productions of the day. Indeed, if they did read former publications, they would have no occasion to read the modern, which, like Mr. Pennant's, are borrowed wholesale from the more ancient: it is sad to say, that the borrowers add little new but mistakes. I have just been turning over Mr. Nichols's eight volumes of 'Select Poems,' which he has swelled unreasonably with large collops of old authors, most of whom little deserved revivifying. I bought them for the biographical notes, in which I have found both inaccuracies and blunders. For instance, one that made me laugh. In Lord Lansdown's 'Beauties' he celebrates a lady, one Mrs. Vaughan. Mr. Nichols [vol. v. p. 290] turns to the peerage of that time, and finds a Duke of Bolton[1] married a Lady Ann Vaughan; he instantly sets her down for the lady in question, and introduces her to posterity as a beauty. Unluckily she was a monster, so ugly, that the Duke (then Marquis of Winchester) being forced by his father to marry her [1713] for her great fortune, was believed never to have consummated, and parted from her as soon as his father died [1722]; but, if our predecessors are exposed to these misrepresentations, what shall we be, when not only all private history is detailed in the newspapers, but scarce ever with tolerable fidelity? I have long said, that if a paragraph in a newspaper contains a word of truth, it is sure to be accompanied with two or three blunders; yet, who will believe that papers published in the face of the whole town should be nothing but magazines of lies, every one of which fifty persons could contradict and disprove? Yet so it certainly is, and future history will probably be ten times falser than all preceding. Adieu! Yours most sincerely.

[1] Charles, third Duke; Polly Peachem's husband.—CUNNINGHAM.

2162. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, June 25, 1782.

I FIND there is a correspondence commenced between you and Mr. Hayley by the Parnassus post. I did not know you were acquainted; I suppose you met at Calliope's: if you love incense, he has fumigated you like a flitch of bacon. However, I hope in the Lord Phœbus that you will not take his advice any more than Pope did that of such another sing-song warbler, Lord Lyttelton; nor be persuaded to write an Epic poem (that most senseless of all the species of poetic composition, and which pedants call the *chef d'œuvre* of the human mind); well, you may frown, as in duty bound, yet I shall say what I list.

Epic poetry is the art of being as long as possible in telling an uninteresting story; and an Epic poem is a mixture of History without truth, and of Romance without imagination. We are well off when from that *mesalliance* there spring some bastards called Episodes, that are lucky enough to resemble their romantic mother, more than their solemn father. So far from Epic poetry being at the head of composition, I am persuaded that the reason why so exceedingly few have succeeded is from the absurdity of the species. When nothing has been impossible to genius in every other walk, why has everybody failed in this but the inventor, Homer? You will stare, but what are the rest? Virgil, with every beauty of expression and harmony that can be conceived, has accomplished but an insipid imitation. His Hero is a nullity, like Mellefont and the virtuous characters of every comedy, and some of his incidents, as the Harpies and the ships turned to Nymphs, as silly as Mother Goose's tales. Milton, all imagination, and a thousand times more sublime and spirited, has produced a monster. Lucan, who often says more in half a line than Virgil in a whole book, was lost in bombast if he talked for thirty lines together. Claudian and Statius had all his fustian with none of his quintessence. Camoens had more true grandeur than they, but with grosser faults. Dante was extravagant, absurd, disgusting, in short a Methodist Parson in Bedlam. Ariosto was a more agreeable Amadis de Gaul, and Spenser, John Bunyan in rhyme. Tasso wearies one with their insuperable crime of stanza and by a thousand puerilities that are the very opposite of that dull dignity which is demanded for Epic: and Voltaire, who retained

his good sense in heroics, lost his spirit and fire in them. In short, Epic poetry is like what it first celebrated, the heroes of a world that knew nothing better than courage and conquest. It is not suited to an improved and polished state of things. It has continued to degenerate from the founder of the family, and happily expired in the last bastard of the race, Ossian.

Still, as Mr. Hayley has allowed such a latitude to heroic poesy as to admit the 'Lutrin,' the 'Dispensary,' and the 'Dunciad' as Epic poems, I can forgive a man who recommends to a friend to pen a Tragedy when he will accept of the 'Way of the World' as one.

For Mr. Hayley himself, though he chants in good tune, and has now and then pretty lines amongst several both prosaic and obscure, he has, I think, no genius, no fire, and not a grain of *originality*, the first of merits (in my eyes) in these latter ages, and a more certain mark of genius than in the infancy of the world, when no ground was broken, nor even, in the sportsman's phrase, *foiled*. It is that originality that I admire in your 'Heroic Epistle' and in your genuine style, which, I trust, you will not quit to satisfy the impartial Mr. Hayley (who, though a good patriot, equally cherishes Janizaries)

> That to you *do not belong*
> *The beauties of envenomed song.*

For writing an Epic poem, it would be as wise to set about copying Noah's Ark, if Mons. de Buffon should beg you to build a Menagerie for a couple of every living creatures upon earth, when there is no longer any danger of a general inundation.

I doubt your new friend will write his readers and his own reputation to death; every poem has a train of prose as long as Cheapside, with a vast parade of reading that would be less dear if it had any novelty or vivacity to recommend it. I know as little new as he, except that Lord Rockingham is very ill. I believe not without danger, should he fall, there would be a new scene indeed! Adieu!

P.S. I find I have said above, every living *creatures*, is not that bad English? and if it is, is not it better—than *a couple of every living creature?*

2163. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

THE weather, I confess, did change, Madam, as suddenly and unexpectedly as the Administration, and both probably for a short time. His majesty, the sun, who had not shone a good while, came out in a very warm mood, and everybody was impatient to kiss his hand; but in three days his chancellor, the east wind, turned those halcyon days to a storm, and I look upon the bloom of summer as gone. I have been twice at Strawberry, but shall not settle there till next week, when my Court removes over sea and leaves me at liberty, which I shall enjoy as much as the Duke of Manchester or Lord Ludlow do a drawing-room. My nephew, Lord Cholmondeley, you know, Madam, is going to Berlin: he refused Russia, which I should have thought he would have preferred, as he is more formed to succeed with a gallant Empress than with a peevish old politician, and could carry better credentials. They say the Prussian King is at last well disposed to us and huffs the Dutch *à notre intention*. If, after all, we do not sink, English vanity will conclude more than ever that Providence dotes upon us, and never will let us be ruined, let us play the fool as much as we will. I have a better opinion of Providence, and, unless it originally bestowed good luck on fools as a balance and compensation, I do not believe that it employs itself in remedying blunders. My countrymen, with their leave, are exceedingly contemptible. They have, for these seven years, been applauding and encouraging the Court to persist in all its frenzy and obstinacy, and now it rains addresses of thanks to his Majesty for changing his Administration; though they have no reason to thank him or themselves for the change.

Strawberry Hill, June 28.

I had begun this letter a week ago here, in answer to your Ladyship's last, was interrupted, and left it here in my table drawer; yet though it is superannuated, it will be as new as anything I could tell you. Besides, Lord Ossory has been in town, and carried you all the novelties of the week, if there were any. Lord Rockingham was said to be better yesterday, but that is a very ancient date in the health of a First Minister. What would Lord Shelburne think of my want of curiosity, who came out of town this morning without inquiring? I am to dine to-morrow with Princess Amelie at Gunnersbury, must return on Sunday for the last drawing-room at

Gloucester House; and on Thursday shall be sovereign of myself again, which is much more important to me than who is to be first Lord of the Treasury, if the Marquis is carried off in his second dictatorship. Three hours ago I saw just the reverse of what is passing in Lord Rockingham's ante-chamber. It was Lady North, her three daughters, and one of her sons, taking a solitary promenade on the river, and landing to stroll on the shore, without a single Rosencrantz or Guildenstern attending. Forty years ago I myself was one of the *dramatis personæ* in such a scene; and as even then, I was perfectly indifferent to the change of decorations, it is not surprising that I should look on them now with much composure; but it was constitution, not philosophy: philosophy is only a command of muscles. I never could command mine, when I really cared; and should have made a miserable politician had I ever felt a sensation of ambition.

I believe there is some apprehension of a visit in the Channel from the United Squadrons. I heard a good deal about them t'other night, and dreamt the French had landed at *Torbay*, which I loved myself for, as it showed what a preference there is at my heart to *Torbay*. At least, I am sure that I had paid little attention to the idea of an invasion, but a great deal to a *modicum* of King William's coat, taken out of his wound after the battle of the Boyne, and set in a crystal locket, which Mrs. Walsingham showed me a week ago, and which probably gave the colour to my dream.

The Bishop of Salisbury [Hume] is dead; I conclude Bishop Shipley [St. Asaph] will succeed him, nor can have above one competitor, Bishop Hinchliffe, [Peterborough] unless your[1] *beaufrère* is immediately premier, and names the Chancellor's brother.[2] I suppose to-night I shall dream of Bishop Hoadley; for you see, Madam, I am an old Whig even in my sleep, and that the powers of darkness cannot affect my principles.

2164. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[3]

Berkeley Square, July 1, 1782.

I WISH, my dear Lord, I had told you how very much I admire

[1] Lord Shelburne, who married Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick, Lord Ossory's sister.—R. VERNON SMITH.

[2] Shute Barrington, Bishop of Llandaff, succeeded Hume in the see of Salisbury.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

Lady Harcourt! I am sure you would have left her at my house. I did but mention the head of Addison—and I found it on my table. I must have Aladdin's lanthorn without knowing it, and you are certainly one of the genies subservient to it, that obey in a twinkling whatever—but, no,—for once, Mr. Genie, you are mistaken. I not only did not order you to send Addison, but you must transport it back, or I will. It is very hard if one cannot make a visit to a gentleman, and ask whose that picture is, but one must have an officious lanthorn at one's tail, like Io, Mio, and Rio, that fancies one longs, and that one's next child will be marked with what one longed for, if one has not it that instant. Good Genie, take notice, I am not breeding, nor do I wish for everything I see. You have filled my house and every cranny of it already, and it will hold nothing more. Do you think because I am old that I covet more and more, and that I am as rapacious as you are bountiful and magnificent?

Seriously, my dear Lord, you shall allow me next winter to return you the Addison. I truly have no room for it: you have a collection of English Poets—I have not; and over and above all these reasons, pray believe that I am as interested in Nuneham as in Strawberry, and have as much pleasure in its being ornamented. I have little time left to enjoy anything, and who knows what will become of Strawberry, and how soon it may be put up to auction? I am infinitely sensible of all your goodness to me, and much prouder of it than of a collection. Were it the Tribune of Florence I cannot pay a thousandth part of my debts to you, nor, much as I would, my attachment and respect to your Lordship and Lady Harcourt; and when you heap new favours on me, you add to my distress. I meant to quarrel with you ironically, but my heart overflowed: Gratitude is a simple awkward creature that cannot disguise its feelings; and though it has the shortest memory of all the virtues, it cannot help saying what it thinks, when taken by surprise. This time my gratitude shall be perfectly pure, for though it shall restore your present, it shall never forget it.

I came to town yesterday for *our* last Drawing-room; but heard nothing new. The suspense about Lord Rockingham continues. Dr. Warren thought him likely to recover on Saturday, but the night was bad. The message to-day is, that his days are good, but the nights bad. By what I can collect, his friends, if Lord Rockingham fails, are little disposed to submit to the probable successor. I shall take the liberty of writing, should the event happen; you know I have little connection, but my accounts may be a little more authentic than

the newspapers. I must finish abruptly, for, my dear Lord, you have made it impossible for words to tell you how much I am, &c.

Four o'clock.

I wrote this but two hours ago. Lord Cholmondeley has this moment been here, and told me that Lord Rockingham died three hours ago: your Lordship shall hear again the moment I know anything that can be depended upon.

2165. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, July 1, 1782.

I CAN tell you but one word, but that is a momentous one. Lord Rockingham died at one o'clock at noon to-day. It is concluded that Lord Shelburne will succeed him and the American War revive, and many of its authors, you may be sure of all, if *Starvation* [Dundas] is sent for from Edinburgh.

I did not expect the new Administration to be long-lived, but it was not of a natural death that I thought it would die.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, July 2, 1782.

DON'T be afraid; I will give you my bible oath, if you demand it, that I will never write an Epic Poem, but will stop my ears like the deaf adder to the voice of the charmer, "charm he ever so wisely," which by the way I do not think he does; for where is the wisdom in giving one an analysis of forty pages of a Spanish poem, which analysis proves that it must of necessity be the dullest and foolishest of them all. However, to answer[1] the polite letter which accompanied Mr. Hayley's work, I assure you cost me more pains than the planning an epic poem would have done. The difficulty arose chiefly from my having resolved previously not to say one syllable on the subject, and that because I thought precisely as ill of it as you do.

I have at last seen Bishop Newton's 'Life.' It is exactly the same sort of prate which I used to hear with so much disgust at the Chaplain's table. 'Tis as you say, "a Mirror of Episcopal Biography:"—

He's Knight of the Shire, and represents them all.

There was a Bishop, I think it was Sprat, who thanked God that, though he was not educated at Westminster, yet he became a Bishop.[2] I, on the contrary, would not have been educated there for the best pair of lawn sleeves in the kingdom. But *de gustibus non est disputandum.*

I have seen lately an extract of a letter from the poetess Miss Seward, whom Mr.

[1] See Mason's answer to Hayley of the 26th June, 1782, in Hayley's Memoirs.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] "But the honour of being a Westminster schoolboy some have at one age, and some at another; and some all their life long. Our grateful Bishop, though he had it not in his youth, yet it came upon him in his old age." *Warburton; note on Pope's Imitation of Horace.*—CUNNINGHAM.



Sir J. Reynolds. pinx.

CHARLES WATSON WENTWORTH.

Second Marquis of Rockingham K. G.

Twice Prime Minister of England.

London. Richard Bentley & Son. 1891.

2166. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, July 1, 1782.

UNDOUBTEDLY you will have as early intelligence as I can send you, Madam, of to-day's great event: Lord Rockingham died at one o'clock at noon. Unless I could tell you what is to be, it would be idle to add more, or to talk of any other subject than what this event will produce; and as I have neither the honour of being a prophet, nor am of the drawer of any Cabinet, I will not pretend to say what will be, nor (like a thousand others who know no more than I, and who will not be more consulted) what should be, though I am perfectly clear what ought to be; but as the crown is lapsed to King George again, and as he may not happen to be of my opinion, I shall keep it to myself, and be ready, like the Vicar of Bray, to admire the choice, whatever it shall be.

They say there has not a *howd'ye* as big as a silver penny been sent from Windsor, nor any inquiry made; and yet I should think

Hayley praises so much in one of his epistles;[1] "she lays the 'Archæological Epistle' roundly at my door, and praises it highly," but says, "Mr. Hayley has his doubts about the author."

Who shall decide when (such) doctors disagree? I have been waiting here above a week for a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Weddel, who are detained in town by Lord Rockingham's illness. Had it not been for this, I believe I should have come through London to Oxfordshire; but as I now find Lord Harcourt has got to Nuneham, I shall cross the country to-morrow by Birmingham, see Hagley and Mr. Shenstone's, and, as I travel with my own horses, not reach Nuneham till Saturday or Sunday. From him I mean to make you a visit at Strawberry, when you are really settled there, unless you have promised to visit him in Oxfordshire. This I shall know in our correspondence, which will now be nearer and speedier.

Your most obliged and faithful servant,
W. MASON.

I have had a letter from Mr. Sherman, whose business is now completely settled, full of gratitude to you and the Duke of Richmond. What will become of us if Lord Rockingham dies?

[1] The praises these votaries of the Muses used to bestow on each other called out the following *jeu-d'esprit* from the pen of the Greek professor:

MISS SEWARD.—Pride of Sussex, England's glory,
Mr. Hayley, that is you.

MR. HAYLEY.—Ma'am, you carry all before you,
Trust me, Lichfield swan, you do.

MISS SEWARD.—Ode, dramatic, epic, sonnet,
Mr. Hayley, you're divine.

MR. HAYLEY.—Ma'am, I'll give my word upon it,
You yourself are—all the Nine, &c.—MITFORD.

there was care taken to have minute intelligence. I can give you some very good of the negative kind, Madam. Though there is a mitre vacant [Salisbury], and it is now six o'clock, I have not seen a divine knocking at a pair of gates [Shelburne House] in this square, nor are any marrowbones and cleavers yet arrived.

It will be a singular year if the next six months produce as strange events as these six have; a total change, the caterpillars, the influenza, and the death of a Prime Minister. *Apropos*, I was forced last Saturday to have two bird-cherries at Strawberry Hill cut down and burnt; they were totally covered with webs, like a sheet full of well-grown caterpillars—as I have prodigious faith in nature's prognostics, I am persuaded that we are not yet secure against an inundation of Scotch Ministers. I picked up a caterpillar myself that had as many colours as a plaid. You that have no superstition, Madam, may laugh at me for telling you of my dreams and omens—to be sure, I did not use to be so credulous; but remember,

> The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
> Lets in new light through chinks which time has made.—[*Waller.*]

I have so many of those inlets, that no wonder my faith increases; but adieu, Madam, I will go and hear what the world says.

P.S. Oh! I have got a new omen, that tells me Lord Shelburne will be minister—premiers always live where I do. In Arlington-street, my father, Lord Granville, Mr. Pelham, the Duke of Grafton. It is odd that their star and mine should *domicilier* together; but the nearer the church—

2167. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Monday night, July 1, 1782.

This is to announce an important event which you could not expect. Lord Rockingham died at one o'clock at noon to-day. You will want to ask one, and many other questions, which nobody in London can answer yet. Who is to be First Minister? Will the new Administration continue?—Stay,—till I can tell you the first, it is in vain to proceed in your interrogatories—I may as well go back for a few days. This letter will not depart till to-morrow night. Whether I shall be able to tell you more by that time, can I guess?

This death was not a sudden one. The Marquis has been ill above a week, and in danger for some days. At first, Dr. Warren thought it water in his stomach, then changed his opinion, Sir Noah Thomas doubted whether it was water. It signifies little now what it was. He was always of a very bad constitution. I remember an elder brother of his at Eton, who was subject to violent convulsions, and died of them. Lord Rockingham was extremely splenetic about his health (the consequence of bad), and some years ago wanted to have his side opened, believing he had an abscess there. Six weeks ago, I heard that Dr. Warren told him he could not live if he continued in business.

Well! no man ever before attained twice the great object of his wishes, and enjoyed it both times for so short a season: the first time but a year—now, not four months. The death of the late Duke of Devonshire, and the want of a leader, set Lord Rockingham at the head of the Whigs, from his rank, great fortune, and fair character. Those were his pretensions and merit. His parts were by no means great: he was nervous, and mere necessity alone made him at all a speaker in Parliament; where, though he spoke good sense, neither flattery nor partiality could admire or applaud. He was rather trifling and dilatory in business than indolent. Virtues and amiability he must have possessed; for his party esteemed him highly, and his friends loved him with unalterable attachment. In the excess of faction that we have seen, he was never abused; and no man in public life, I believe, had ever fewer enemies. His death may be more remembered than his actions would have been, and may have greater consequences than any plan of *his* would have had; for he countenanced a system rather than instigated it Whoever is his successor will not be of so negative a character.

This is the second prime minister I have seen die in office. I do not believe the current will glide on as smoothly as it did on Mr. Pelham's death; but that moment was very different from this! I could make divers reflections on all I have seen and known in a long life—but I will not.

Adieu till to-morrow—not that I expect to be able to tell you more of the Administration then. If you do not hear again by Friday's post, you will conclude that nothing is settled. You have known longer interministeriums.

Tuesday, after dinner.

The evening comes on, and I must go out, without being able to tell you more than I wrote last night. Because they do not know,

the town has guessed many successors—as Lord Shelburne, the Dukes of Richmond, Portland, and Devonshire, and Lord Gower. The first and last may be candidates: I believe none of the Dukes are. From my late letters you may perceive that there might be still a sixth person in question, but who certainly will not be,—I mean, not successor: but you must have patience; and it is better not to be surprised, whatever you shall hear. I shall be much surprised if nothing happens to surprise you. Adieu!

2168. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

July 5, 1782.

I WISH, my dear Lord, that I had not promised to send you further accounts, as I can tell you nothing that is agreeable. At present, though the humours are come to a *head*, they break faster than they gather. To speak intelligibly, the death of Lord Rockingham, whom I cannot admire more than I did, on the mere merit of being dead, has already produced great dissension. What has happened, I can tell you; that is, what had happened before last night. I begin this letter at noon, not answering for anything that may have passed this morning. Lord Shelburne is named—I do not say, appointed to the Treasury. Charles Fox and Lord John Cavendish have resigned. The Duke of Richmond, General Conway, T. Townshend, the Duke of Manchester, Lord Effingham, are for going on; Lord Keppel will stay a little while; of others I know only flying reports. Mr. William Pitt is to be Secretary of State, or Chancellor of the Exchequer, but these are individuals—what is to become of England? what of the peace with America? what of the favourable dispositions there may be in Europe? Here are the Whigs divided almost as soon as triumphant!—What a moment gave a moment has destroyed!

2 *o'clock.*

I was interrupted by several persons calling in. The report is, that Burke resigns, and it is concluded the Duke of Portland will. Mr. Pitt has returned his briefs to his clients, and within this hour, the first battle will be fought in the House of Commons between him and Mr. Fox, the former declaring loudly against the factious resignation of the latter. This is Mr. Pitt's language, not mine;

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

the motives of both are the same. The Duke of Richmond and Mr. Conway have laboured to prevent disunion in the Administration, and implored harmony at least till pacification with America should be accomplished;—but in vain! In short, on every side there is nothing to comfort, a vast deal to lament. Mr. Stonhewer and I have been sighing together. Is Mr. Mason at Nuneham? I wrote a line to him on Monday, which probably has not reached him; when it does, he will know what I chiefly lament, yet I did not foresee all that I do now.

I can tell your Lordship nothing you will be glad to hear, but that the parting of two persons you love was much better than I expected.

6 o'clock.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Mason of the 2nd, and find that he will not be with your Lordship before to-morrow at soonest.

The Prince of Wales dined with Mr. Fox yesterday by previous engagement; they drank royally. Charles went thence to Brooks's, stayed till four in the morning, and it being so early, finished the evening at White's with Lord Weymouth,—"and the evening and the morning and the next day were the first day." Amen, and so be it!

2169. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Sunday evening, July 7, 1782.

You will not be surprised, my dear Madam, that either I do not write or do not know what to write. What I think and feel, I can best tell you by what I said to Mr. Fitzpatrick last night. I met him in the passage of the playhouse; he said, "I fear you do not approve us." I replied, "I feel concern so much more than disapprobation, that I call it only concern." He said, "It was coming fast to this point *before* Lord Rockingham's death;" "Yes," I answered, "but I wish it had not come to this point these three months!" These sentiments might be rolled out into a long commentary, but they contain the pith.

I have no hesitation in saying that I think Mr. Fox[1] the fittest

[1] About this period was written by Lord Ossory the following character of Mr. Fox:—

"I look upon Mr. Charles James Fox, now Secretary of State, to be one of the most extraordinary men that ever existed. He is the second son of Henry, Lord

man in England for Prime Minister; I say it aloud and everywhere. But there are points in question at this moment far more important than who shall be Premier. The pacification of America and the negotiations on the anvil are of dearer moment; and ought not, cannot wait, for domestic contests. Every man, too, has his own feelings. I have been called a Republican; I never was quite that, as no man ever was quite of any of the denominations laid down in books. But, if never a Republican quite, I never approached in thought, wish, inclination, or reasoning, towards being a partizan of an aristocracy. What! not be a Republican, and yet approve a republic of tyrants! I never admired Lord Rockingham: shall his self-elected executors tell me that I am to take the oaths to Lord

Holland, a man much distinguished in his time; was educated at Eton, and was afterwards a short time at Christ Church, Oxford. His father was doatingly fond of him, indulging him, but also reasoning with him upon every occasion. He was very young when his father finished his political career; but hearing from his childhood a constant conversation upon political subjects and the occurrences in the House of Commons, he was both by nature and education formed for a statesman. His father delighted to cultivate his talents by argumentation, and reasoning with him upon all subjects.

"He took his seat in the House of Commons before he was twenty-one, and very shortly began to show the dawn of those prodigious talents which he has since displayed. He was much caressed by the then Ministry, and appointed a Lord of the Admiralty, and soon promoted to the Treasury. Lord North (which he must ever since have repented) was inclined to turn him out upon some trivial occasion or difference; and soon afterwards the fatal quarrel with America commenced, Mr. Fox constantly opposing the absurd measures of Administration, and rising by degrees to be the first man the House of Commons ever saw. His opposition continued from 1773 to 1782, when the Administration was fairly overturned by his powers; for even the great weight of ability, property, and influence that composed the Opposition, could never have effected that great work, if he had not acquired the absolute possession and influence of the House of Commons. He certainly deserved their confidence, for his political conduct has been fair, open, honest, and decided, against the system so fatally adopted by the Court. He resisted every temptation to be brought over by that system, however flattering to his ambition, for he must soon have been at the head of everything. But I do not know whether his abilities are not the least extraordinary part about him. Perhaps that is saying too much; but he is full of good nature, good temper, and facility of disposition, disinterestedness with regard to himself, at the same time that his mind is fraught with the most noble sentiments and ideas upon all possible subjects. His understanding has the greatest scope I can form an idea of, his memory the most wonderful, his judgment the most true, his reasoning the most profound and acute, his eloquence the most rapid and persuasive."

It is highly honourable to both, that, in 1793, when Lord Ossory separated from him, he makes the ensuing entry in his memoranda:—

"1793.—I retract none of my former sentiments of Mr. Fox, but I can differ with him. This detestable French Revolution is the cause, and though I am sure he does not approve it, yet he will not give countenance to the war which we are now engaged in, and in which everything is at stake. He leans in these dangerous times to opinions, which, if not destroyed, must destroy all order and civilisation in Europe."—R. Vernon Smith.

Fitzwilliam; I who was a non-juror in the uncle's time! I see a very good reason why Mr. Fox should say that that imaginary King never dies; but, as I told him t'other night, my Whiggism is founded on the Constitution, not on two or three great families, who are forced to have virtue for a claim to their dignity, and any able man they can find to execute the office for them. My Whiggism is not confined to the Peak of Derbyshire.

In my tiny sphere I have been labouring to prevent disunion; to very little purpose truly. Mr. Fox has suffered me, with his usual and unalterable good humour, to talk to him very freely; not on the general rupture, for I am neither vain enough nor foolish enough to suppose that I can persuade him by *my* arguments out of his own; nor do I talk to a politician on his duty to his country, because a master-genius feels something in himself which inferior mortals cannot feel, and which tells him that whatever hurt he does he can repair the moment he is possessed of full power; but my point has been, and shall be, to endeavour to preserve good terms between him and his uncle Duke [Richmond]. Even in that I may fail at present, but they are both too good natured not to forgive on the first opportunity.

There is a world more of topics for talk, but the tide is too rapid at present, not to hurry the present moment away, and supply its place before the post can arrive. I have sketched my thoughts, as it would look like want of confidence or political mystery if I were silent. I am apt to be too frank, and thank my stars I have no secrets to conceal. I like and dislike, and say so, and readily avow my purposes. I long to get to Strawberry, where I shall have no purposes at all. When this vision of a Whig Administration, so unlikely ever to be realised, had acquired substance—not then likely to last, has vanished so instantaneously, what a dotard should I be, if again I looked forward! Adieu! Madam; I do not believe you enjoy the crisis more than I do; but I beg you not to suppose that I desire an answer. It cannot be pleasant to you to talk on points that touch you more nearly; but I am a creature *isolé*, and what I think or say is of no consequence.

2170. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, July 7, 1782.

I do not pretend to be a prophet; at least, I confess I am one of that wary sort, who take care to be very sure of what will happen before they venture to foretell. I ordered you to expect to be surprised—no very wise way of surprising! In truth, I did foresee that Lord Rockingham's death would produce a very new scene; and so it has: but is it possible to give an account of what is only beginning? The few real facts that have actually happened are all that one can relate with certainty. They will open wide fields of conjectures to you, and, at your distance, probably not very just ones; nor, as I affect no sagacity, shall I offer you a clue that may lead you as much out of the way.

Lord Rockingham died on Monday. On Tuesday it was known amongst the Ministers, that Lord Shelburne was to succeed. This was not unforeseen; but did not please those the better who were disposed to dislike it. Lord John Cavendish, who had most unwillingly been dragged into the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared, that nothing should make him retain it under any other man than his late friend, for whose sake he had undertaken it. Mr. Fox more directly protested against Lord Shelburne. The Duke of Richmond and General Conway endeavoured to prevent disunion in the new system, and on Wednesday night did not despair; but on Thursday, at Court, Mr. Fox arrived, took Lord Shelburne aside, asked him abruptly, if he was to be First Lord of the Treasury; and, being answered in the affirmative, said, "Then, my Lord, I shall resign" —went into the Closet, and left the Seals, which he had brought in his pocket, with the King.

The schism begun, has gone farther. Everybody knew that the Rockingham and Shelburne squadrons, who had never been cordial even in opposition, had with great difficulty been brought to coalesce in the formation of the Administration, and some knew that their conjunction had not proceeded with much amity. In the first moment it was still hoped by moderate men that the breach—I mean the present—would not go far; as many disapprove Mr. Fox's precipitation. But he and Lord John had not taken their part with indifference. A meeting of the late Marquis's friends was held yesterday at Lord Fitzwilliam's—the nephew or Octavius of

the late Cæsar, but no more likely to be an Augustus, than the Marquis was a Julius. After a debate of six hours the whole junto, except the Duke of Richmond, resolved to secede; but, by *whole junto*, you must not understand all who had been adherents to Lord Rockingham. Some who had been would not attend this novel institution of hereditary right, nor understand why the Government is to be permanent in two or three great families, like the Hebrew priesthood in one tribe; General Conway, you may be sure, was not of that assembly. He never would attach himself to either or any faction; and, though they may change their note, the dissidents themselves yet allow that they have no claim to his allegiance, and that he always acts by the rule of right—they forget that that law ought to supersede the ties of party.

Mr. Fox's proclamation of his pretensions—which I allow are very good, if qualifications gave a right of succession (which he did not indeed directly claim, naming the Duke of Portland for successor to Lord Rockingham, who certainly would not degenerate if insufficience proved the true heir),—has called forth a rival, who, it was foreseen, must become so sooner or later. Don't you anticipate me, and cry out "What! Mr. William Pitt?" Yes! he is to be Secretary of State—at two-and-twenty—that is some glory![1]

What else is to be, I am sure I cannot tell you. Perhaps by Tuesday night more may be settled; for, as the Parliament is to rise on Wednesday, the posts that may be vacant will be filled up, for the new writs to issue. Guesses I do not name, not to be obliged to contradict them. The new Opposition will be weak in numbers, and have none at all but dignified cyphers in the House of Lords. Lord Rockingham's party was not numerous, though the strongest of any single faction; and it loses its real chief, the Duke of Richmond, and a few more. Fox and Burke are its only efficient men. There are other points on which you might wish to question me; but I do not choose to *write* more than might be in the newspapers, but with this difference, that I relate nothing but facts that have entity.

Monday.

The meeting at Lord Fitzwilliam's was not so unanimous as I had heard. Lord Temple was warmly with the Duke of Richmond, and

[1] Lord Shelburne having been promoted to the head of the Treasury, and Mr. Fox and Lord John Cavendish having resigned their respective situations, Mr. Thomas Townshend and Lord Grantham were made Secretaries of State, and Mr. Pitt Chancellor of the Exchequer.—WRIGHT.

two or three other Lords. The former, it is supposed, will be Secretary of State with his cousin Pitt. The Duke is grossly abused by the new Separatists, as he had been before by the late Administration. When a man is traduced by both sides, it is no bad symptom of his virtue. If a man sacrifices all parties to his momentary interest, he may be universally despised, but he does not provoke. If his change proceeds from conscience, he must be aspersed, that his integrity may not shine. As the Duke was conspicuously more proper for the first post than Lord Rockingham, he had more reason to be dissatisfied with the nomination than to support it. The trifling post of Master of the Ordnance could not be an object worthy of his ambition or selfishness; and, by retaining it, he shows he did not aim at an higher.

Tuesday.

If anything extraordinary should happen before Friday I will write again on that day, as this must go away to-night. I shall go to Strawberry at the end of the week, and come to town very seldom before winter,—consequently, shall know nothing but general news which I shall send you as usual. I never trouble myself about the disposition of places; I wish for peace fervently, and must preserve my own, if I cannot contribute to that of the public or of particulars. Luckily, I remember that I am older than almost any man left upon the stage, and will not hobble like Nestor to the siege of Troy, with boys three hundred years younger than myself, who would be tired of my old stories of their grandfathers. Adieu!

2171. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Monday, July 8, 1782.

I WISH you did come to town, for how is it possible to fold up Chaos in a letter? nay, how can one relate and not have an opinion? I certainly have one, but it is more decided on the colour of dislike than on that of satisfaction. One can scarce avoid retrospect, or help saying how the worst might have been prevented, but I have not time to look back even ten days. I will go no farther than last Saturday, when, to be sure, a fraction of an aristocracy gave itself as ridiculous airs as ever impertinence did. A meeting of the late Marquis's mutes was summoned at Lord Fitzwilliam's, and it was hoped that all present would swear allegiance to the urn of the departed, which was proclaimed to contain all that was precious in our country. The

Duke of Richmond was impious enough to think peace with America preferable to those holy cinders, though they are said to contain and to be able to convey a right of transmitting the sceptre and purse of this nation to whom they pleased, or Lord John [Cavendish] should please; and his Lordship pleased that the Duke of Portland should be the ostensible, and Mr. Fox the real monarch of the Whigs, and Mr. Fox was of the same opinion; not all the rest were. The Lords Berkeley, Craven, and De Ferrars presumed to dissent, and Lord Temple loudly; so nothing excepting Fox and Burke remained in the crucible, but the *caput mortuum*. I hope we shall have a codicil to Magna Charta produced, for we are certainly to have a new War of the Barons, a struggle between the King and some great Peers in which the people are to go for nothing.

Don't imagine from what I have been saying that I am delighted on the other side; no, my good friend, I am a true Englishman, and am much more easily dissatisfied than pleased. I dislike the new dish that is served up, and shall taste but a few of the old ingredients that are tossed up again, and shall have no stomach at all to the older sauces that will come upon table again, and for which the new removes have made room.

Well! America and Ireland have had the sense and spirit to assert themselves; that is great comfort. England, alias Nova Scotia, little deserves freedom.

I know nothing certainly of the intended distribution of places. Mr. Pitt and Lord Temple I believe are to be Secretaries of State.

At this moment perhaps Lord Howe may be fighting the combined squadrons, who could not know that he had above fifteen ships, and he undoubtedly has twenty-three to their twenty-eight or thirty, and five three-deckers to their one, besides the flower of the ocean. We have a better chance by seamen than by politicians. *O Neptune, ora pro nobis!*

I am rejoiced that you do not intend to answer Mr. Hayley in heroics. Since gunpowder was invented and heroic virtue was out of fashion, and Circe and Calypso and Armida have left no natural children to inveigle a stray adventurer, whom the gods used to be so good as to assist in seeking his fortune, and help him into mishaps in order to get him out, I see no materials for making anew an old thing called an Epic poem. Even demigods have intermarried till their race are become downright *mestises*, (I forget the mongrel shades in the colonies,) and have little of ethereal clay left in their composition; I mean those half-divinities whom antiquity called

patriots, and the moderns, Russells and Sidneys. I could tell you some tales that would make your hair stand on end instead of dipping you in Castalia, but you may trust the new parties for not letting you remain in ignorance; they have mutual tales to tell, believe me.

Lord Harcourt, by a letter I have received to-day, says, you are sitting on a rafter and dining out of a hod of mortar; no matter you are at Nuneham and can stroll about Elysium. Whenever you are tired of it, you will be gladly received at Strawberry, and will find a saucer of hautboys for your dinner. Pray settle the plan for the castle, and bring the measurement of the windows that we may fit the painted glass to them, and, above all, torment Lady Harcourt to send me her Poems, that I may begin printing. I shall be gathered to Caxton and my ancestors if she does not make haste. Adieu.

P.S. I was going to seal my letter when good old Lord George Cavendish came in. We talked over very coolly the new schism; I told him fairly that I wished they would, as they had united with Lord Shelburne, have borne with him for three months, entering what caveat or protest they pleased against his continuance, till the peace with America was concluded, Ireland settled, alliances concluded on the Continent, and perhaps reconciliation with Holland; and I added, "My dear Lord, don't you think that this new dissension will be heard with transport in France?" he answered, "Undoubtedly." I was answered. I put the same question this morning to Mr. Fox—he replied, "Oh, it will do a great deal of mischief."—Judge.

To-morrow we shall hear Mr. Fox's reasons for his resignation. Lord George [Cavendish] owned to me that there might be reasons that could *not* be given; I said, "My Lord, will worse reasons satisfy the country?"

The most certain thing that will happen is a torrent of abuse on the Duke of Richmond, Lord Shelburne, and Mr. Fox; so malignity at least will have its Saturnalia. The coarsest waters of the kennel will be thrown on the two former, but by what I hear as yet, there will be ten buckets for one emptied on the latter; and yet the most stinking may be diffused the widest.

2172. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, July 10, 1782.

Don't be frightened: I do not intend to write to you every day, I shall rusticate myself on Friday, and then you will hear little of me more. Now I am not going to tell you the new arrangements, for General Conway forgets them as fast as he hears them. Yet they may be made, and you will learn them from the new Writs.

My business is to give you a sketch of yesterday. It was a curious debate opened by a motion of inquiry on a thumping pension for life to Colonel Barré, signed by Lord Rockingham, Lord Althorp, and Fred. Montagu, and defended by the two last, Lord John [Cavendish] and Grenville. This was one of the tales I reserved. There is another parallel about Burke, but not a quarter so heavy. The debate soon wandered to the resignations. Charles Fox shone but did not dazzle, for his plea was very flimsy,—his suspicion of Lord Shelburne. He attacked General Conway too, and (which I think was a high compliment) called him *an innocent*, who knew nothing, thought nothing of men, but looked to measures, and had wrought great good and great evil. Conway avowed that he did look only to measures, not men, and produced his political creed reduced to the four articles on which the last brief Administration had come into power, viz.—The reduction of the power of the Crown, public economy, the independence of America and that of Ireland. By these tests he desired to be tried, and if he abandoned them, to be condemned; would the orders of the House permit it, he would leave the paper from which he spoke on the table. Mr. Fox not only declared that he regarded men, not measures, but you will laugh—insisted that the Nation calls for the Duke of Portland. The Nation to be sure may call *odd men*, but certainly did not call for his Grace, who, till this nomination to Ireland, scarce an hundred men knew to exist. He has lived in Ducal dudgeon with half-a-dozen toad-eaters secluded from mankind behind the ramparts of Burlington wall,[1] and overwhelmed by debts without a visible expense of two thousand pounds a-year. It is very entertaining that two or three great families should persuade themselves that they have an hereditary and exclusive right of giving us a head without a tongue, nor is it less burlesque to see a fraction of an aristocracy demanding

[1] The Duke of Portland lived at this time in Burlington House, Piccadilly.—Cunningham.

pre-eminence without one speaker in the House of Lords but—Lord Derby.

They will receive another blow as sensible as any they have experienced; Sir George Saville disapproves their proud retreat.

If yesterday was not propitious to the renewed Opposition, it was not more flattering to the person of the new Premier [Shelburne] who was rudely handled, and defended by a Sir William Wake alone, of whom I never heard before. Burke threw a whole basket of invectives on him collected from the Roman history down to Mother Goose's tales. The voice of the town, however, does not hail Mr. Fox, and yet I question whether Lord Shelburne will not soon be the more unpopular.

I have heard this morning, though from no absolute authority, that Lord Howe is returned to St. Helen's, declaring he had found the combined fleets too strong to be attacked yet, though he has but twenty-four ships, and they thirty: it was yesterday expected that we should hear he had fought, and was victorious. I do not at all know how this is to be taken; that is, in what light it is to be interpreted with regard to Lord Keppel, for that will be the consideration on both sides, and not the measure or manœuvre. The nation's good will be pretended, and neither side will think of it except Mr. Conway. Adieu! I am impatient to be gone. All is barefaced faction; ambition and interest have cut away their vizors, or sold them *parlous* dear. Both sides are alike: one cannot value either. Whenever the nation gets an advantage, it is like a half-gnawed bone tossed to a dog under the table.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Nuneham, July 14, 1782.

A THOUSAND thanks to you for your frequent intelligence concerning this strange revolution; concerning which, also, I can make no comment at present, but what you have done; nor do I suppose I shall be able to make up my own mind about it for some time. Indeed, if it be true that Jenkinson has been closeted, as the papers tell us, and if in consequence of that he comes into any ostensible office, I shall not wait for the advent of *Starvation* [Dundas] from Edinburgh to settle my judgment. I shall then look upon the Butæan system as fully restored, and I shall pity Mr. Conway, the Duke of Richmond, and Mr. William Pitt, as three very honest dupes. But at present I will hope better things, and console myself with thinking that though the nation will have lost much by losing certain honest men amongst the late seceders from the administration, it may yet finally be a gainer by having got quit of the absurdity of one [Lord J. C.], whose influence, I trust, now can be nothing, since he might perforce become the subaltern of Charles Fox, in whom I trust he will not find the implicit acquiescence of his late leader [Lord Rockingham] now departed.

I have brought with me hither a precious depot, which at my earnest solicitation you entrusted me with at York, *videlicet* Doctoure Mylles' edition of Rowley, and this I shall send you by the first safe hand. I shall also, if you please, return you

2173. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, July 11, *at midnight,* 1782.

I AM this minute come from Lady Mary Coke's, at Notting Hill, where I dined with the present Commander-in-Chief [General Conway] and the late Chancellor of the Exchequer [Lord John Cavendish] and though the party had been made before the rupture, nothing could pass more amicably; nay, Lord John left us to sup at Richmond House. All this is mighty well, and I might compliment myself on having contributed to preserve appearances; yet I see how little they will last, when any opportunity offers of discovering what is under the embers. Nay, I believe, what moderation remains, proceeds from perceiving already how ill the late precipitation is generally taken. Very ill, indeed, by all not immediately connected with the principal actors.

On my table I found your Ladyship's letter, and sit down to answer it, late as it is, because I shall leave London to-morrow with no thoughts of seeing it again in haste; for, though my two friends [Richmond and Conway] have acted rightly, I am far from being enamoured of anything else. It flatters me much to find that I am so fortunate as to agree with your Ladyship and Lord Ossory, and to find you so full of confidence on a point on which I had no right to expect any. You may be assured nothing you have said will pass my lips; indeed, I shall see nobody to-morrow, and am going to vegetate only among my dowagers.

your notes on certain poems, that they may be increased at your leisure, if you so choose; though I shall do this with some reluctance, fearing a little, lest by hoping for more I may lose what I have.

We are here in a most chaotic state, and dine as if among the ruins of Palmyra, with a broken frieze of Stuart's in one corner, and a French moulding (I know not its name) which is to be its substitute in another. In the mean while we sigh for something Gothic as preferable to either; for my own part, I sigh for nothing but the sun, or what is in my mind always preferable to him, especially in summer, a good West-Riding Yorkshire fire.

Lady Harcourt sends her kindest compliments to you, and desires you would be pleased to send a ticket for seeing Strawberry Hill to a friend of hers, Mr. Wilmot, in Bloomsbury-square. I have had no time to talk to her yet about her Poems, nor has she, I fear, time to correct them.

Lord Harcourt and she join in all kindnesses with your much obliged and most sincere servant

W. MASON.

It is self-evident that the sole way of preventing much evil was by remaining. Nor is it less certain that the rash steps taken must please infinitely in a place whence dissension was always cultivated. What could the opening of so many doors produce but the introduction of some of the late discarded? It will not, in truth, surprise me if the introductor himself is at last sent to graze: nor was I in the wrong when I said in the first moment that power was *lapsed* back again. Some very disgraceful circumstances that have just come out will repay what has been lost with usury, for all credit in patriotism must be lost when its wages are so high.

Your private lamentation, Madam, is equally well founded, though the relapse will be much more dangerous to Mr. Fox than to Mr. Fitzpatrick, whose stamina are of stouter texture; the former, I fear, will destroy himself. I was on the point of saying to him t'other morning, "Well, but you must not go and play at taw again!" but I thought it would be impertinent. What can one suggest that he does not know and must have thought? I did flatter myself that he now was on the high road to all he ought to attain—he would have attained it—but he will neither live to reach the goal, nor, when Parliament is not sitting, take the least pains to promote his own views. But I blame myself for expatiating when you, Madam, have comprised in a short fable the quintessence of all I could say. It is so just, that I wish Mr. Fox had seen it *last Wednesday sevennight*. I do confess it is he on whose account I am mortified. I had pleasure in thinking that, old as I am, I should yet see a first-rate Minister who would revive this country. That vision is over, and every other! I have been shown a glimpse of a new Jerusalem: I waked, and found it was a dream!—here conclude my politics. All will run back into the old channel. A miracle happened—and might almost as well not. At sixty-five it is too late to look forward again. I am as much disappointed as if I had had personal views; but I confess that I find it more easy to comfort myself from having had none. I can wish well to England, as I did before; but when one can neither do good nor prevent mischief, it is allowable to leave the public to itself. It will be a capital loss to me if your Ladyship and Lord Ossory adhere to your purpose of going abroad; but I cannot be so selfish as to disapprove it. Next winter, I am persuaded with you, will be very disagreeable, and to you an anxious one. What one cannot remedy, it is best to avoid.

Thank you exceedingly once more, Madam, for your letter and

fable, and be assured, wherever you are, that while I remain here, I shall be most unalterably

Yours, &c.

2174. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 17, 1782.

I ANSWER your letter directly, that I may lose no time in obeying Lady Harcourt's commands. I have very little else to say, knowing, and intending to know, nothing since I left London. A few words in answer to yours will suffice. My two friends [Richmond and Conway] could do no other than they did, being persuaded from the importance of what was pending abroad, that they should be criminal in quitting at such a moment. Mr. Conway, in particular, had differed and carried the very point against Mr. Fox, on which the latter pretends to have broken. It would have been extraordinary, indeed, if Conway had made that a plea for resigning!

As to the consequences of the rupture, I have no doubt but that they will be the restoration of the old system, sooner or later, in whole or in part; but so I foresaw they would be the moment Lord Rockingham died. Indeed, that was the intention before he came in, for so early had the division begun; or rather, there never had been any union. Pride, rashness, folly, and knavery, have dissipated even pretences, and everything is to begin anew. If you have youth or courage enough to commence a fresh chace, I have no objection. For myself, I confess I am too old; nor am I eager to be aiding and abetting more Irish adventurers in getting pensions of 3000*l.* a year. They have picked the pockets of others full as honest as themselves, and call it saving the nation's money! I shall preserve the principles I have always maintained, but merely as old-fashioned Gothic relics, that are of no use. Some mischiefs are prevented, and now and then some little advantage is obtained for the country *par bricole* by opposition, but you see, and I earlier saw, how all oppositions, when successful, terminate. But I doubt the question, I mean in practice, is reduced to this:—kings want to have slaves for nothing; patriots want to be richly paid for being slaves. All, therefore, that liberty gets is by having the question undecided: opposition keeps it undecided, and implies that there is something to be gotten by it. Thus I am glad there will be a new Opposition, but as to believing in its views, or expecting any benefit to my country from its success, you will excuse me.

I shall be glad to receive *my notes:* I have kept no copy, and wanted to see them, as I have begun the continuation, and would not have the style very incongruous; but I had much rather you would bring them yourself. You promised me a visit: the uninhabitable state of Nuneham makes it impossible for me to come to you. Let us amuse ourselves with pleasanter objects than politics: nothing is left of England but the corpse, which, you see, is very carrion, for the vultures prey on it. I can tell you much of what has passed of late, but for the future am determined neither to think on or concern myself with public affairs. My chief business, if Lady Harcourt and you please, shall be to be her printer and your commentator, and the more you both employ me, the better I shall be satisfied.

P.S. It is not probable that the ticket should reach Mr. Wilmot before Saturday, but as I am to have some *Archæologists* [Gough and Nichols] that day, I was forced to except it. I would not haggle with Lady Harcourt, or should have wished to fix the day, for I have been so invaded lately and had so many quarrels, that I am forced to be rigorous about my rules, and restrict the number to *four*, as I have been seriously abused for having made some exceptions.

2175. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 21, 1782.

Your letter of the 6th, which I received to-day, sets me to writing, though I have no novelty to tell you since the new arrangement of the Administration, of which, I think, I gave you a sketch in my last of the 9th. The most material part to you is the addition of Lord Grantham as Secretary of State. He is a sort of old acquaintance of yours when he was at Vienna, and, I suppose, at Madrid; though, I believe, you never met. He is a very agreeable, pleasing man. Lord Shelburne is certainly the Minister paramount.

The moment is certainly a solemn one: the combined fleets are at the mouth of the Channel, but Lord Howe, though with inferior force, is watching them, and is very different from such old women as Hardy or Darby, and has a most chosen set of officers, men, and ships; as at land we have General Conway, instead of that log of wood, Lord Amherst, whose stupidity and incapacity were past belief, though, before he was known, he was for a moment a hero; for more moments supposed a great man, the Lord knows why.

I have been here these ten days, consequently know nothing more

than what you see in the papers; I must therefore owe the rest of my letter to answering yours. It is not worth while, even for the sake of a paragraph, to tell you that my last morsel of gout was acquired by being blooded twice for the influenza, which I had one of the first. I am now mighty well for me.

I am quite ignorant of your nephew's late campaign in Kent, of which I know nothing but by your letter. I do but cast my eye on the newspapers, which are detestable for their lies, blunders, and scandal, and are half filled by letters of the partizans of different factions, whose sole object is to mislead and infuse prejudices. I never look at the advertisements and paragraphs that relate to elections; and must be surfeited, you may well imagine, after sixty years, with the clamours of parties with which I have nothing to do. Your nephew I have not seen for some time. He has, I think, a good heart; but, being a little volatile and precipitate, his honesty is apt to make him take his part without much consideration. This may draw him into difficulties, but not disreputable ones. Experience will make him more wary; and he will distrust his own judgment, when he finds it is not an infallible guide.

I do not recollect what you said of an *old portrait:* you told me something about one, but I forget what; you now say I have seen it—not to my knowledge. My memory and other defects tell me how old I grow. I hope at least to remember that I do forget. Ancient folks are apt to parry and palliate their decays: it is my duty to watch them, and convince myself of them; which one should think would not be difficult—but self-love is such a flatterer! Adieu!

2176. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, July 23, 1782.

I HAVE been more dilatory than usual, dear Sir, in replying to your last; but it called for no particular answer, nor have I now anything worth telling you. Mr. Gough and Mr. Nichols dined with me on Saturday last. I lent the former three-and-twenty drawings of monuments out of Mr. Lethieullier's books, for his large work, which will be a magnificent one. Mr. Nichols is, as you say, a very rapid editor, and I must commend him for being a very accurate one. I scarce ever saw a book so correct as his 'Life of Mr. Bowyer.' I wish it deserved the pains he has bestowed on it every way, and that he would not dub so many men *great.* I have known several of his

heroes, who were very *little* men. Dr. Mead had nothing but pretensions; and Philip Carteret Webb was a sorry knave with still less foundation. To what a slender total do those shrink who are the idols of their own age! How very few are known at all at the end of the next century! but there is a chapter in Voltaire that would cure anybody of being a great man even in his own eyes. It is a chapter in which a Chinese goes into a bookseller's shop, and marvels at not finding any of his own country's classics. It is a chapter that ought never to be out of the sight of any vain author.

I have just got the catalogue [Ayscough's] of the Manuscripts in the Museum. It is every way piteously dear; the method is extremely puzzling, and the contents chiefly rubbish: who would give a rush for Dr. Birch's correspondence? many of the pieces are in print. In truth, I set little store by a collection of manuscripts. A work must be of little value that never could get into print; I mean, if it has existed half a century. The articles that diverted me most were an absolute novelty; I knew Henry VIII. was a royal author, but not a royal quack. There are several receipts of his own, and this delectable one amongst others. "The King's Grace's oyntement made at St. James's, to coole, and dry, and comfort the ——." Another, to the same purpose, was devised at Cawoode: was not that an episcopal palace? How devoutly was the head of the church employed! I hope that you have recovered your spirits; and that summer, which is arrived at last, will make a great amendment in you.

2177. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1782.

I HAVE received your or rather my volume and the notes. I had already sketched the Preface, but not having the Epistle here I could proceed no further. However, as I must go to town to-morrow I shall bring one down with me; but probably finish this letter there, for I have nothing to tell you, and I am sure am not in your debt for letters or a visit. Nay I do not perceive that your presence at Nuneham advances any work there. I have neither received Lady Harcourt's MS. nor a design for the Gothic building, which my painted glass is to deck. Does your being within the vortex of Oxford benumb all your faculties?

I have borrowed and been reading Monsr. de Lille's poem on Gardening: it is a poor affair, with here and there, but rarely, a few pretty lines, amidst hundreds of very flat. He seems to have no

scientific taste in the matter, but to have picked up some lean ideas which he repeats over and over, and tries to embellish with modern philosophy, a mode more impertinent than their native levity. Their beards are as factitious and awkward as their crooks and scrips were when they used to write about their *bergères* and *hameaux*, and dress Pan and satyrs in flesh-coloured lutestring. You will like better to hear sayings of George Selwyn. On Lord Camden's son having another place, he said, "*sat prata biberunt*," and that the nomination of the Duke of Portland for first Lord of the Treasury put him in mind of an old Presbyterian tract, called, "*A shove to a heavy* * * * *Christian*." In short, he who never read anything, has always a quotation ready and apropos.

Lord Monboddo has proposed himself to Mrs. Garrick, but she rejected *the union*, as the Scots threaten to do; and as it would be lucky if they did—much luckier if they always had, instead of sending all their lean cattle to be fatted in our pastures.

Pray tell Lord Harcourt that poor Clive is better, yet her fits of the jaundice return so often that I much doubt her recovery. Indeed the apothecary fears her liver is affected—she is shrunk to an astonishing degree.

Lady Di Beauclerk is painting a room at her charming villa that was Mr. Gyles's, and that I have christened *Spencer Grove*.[1] It is nothing but a row of lilacs in festoons on green paper, but executed in as great a style as Michael Angelo would have done for a Pope's villa; and without even making a sketch. You would know the *countenance of every* single flower, and call them by their names, but alas! those glorious wreaths that you would wish to cut out and glaze, were any glasses large enough, are painted in water colours, and will not last two summers. In each panel of the surbase she has painted a sprig or chaplet of geranium, or ivy, or periwinkle, and every one is a capital picture. Every plant has its identic character, as her human figures have. You have never seen my picture of her gipsies telling a country girl's fortune, but I don't pity you; you might see it if you would, but I never wish any one to do what is not done but by solicitation.

Berkeley Square, 6th.

I am in town, but it looks as if nobody else was, every house is shut up. I don't understand the language of bricks, or I dare to say

[1] Miss Hotham's beautiful villa, called Spencer Grove, was fitted up with great elegance by Lady Di Beauclerk, who decorated several of the rooms with her own paintings. Lyson's 'Environs,' 1795; article, 'Twickenham.'—CUNNINGHAM.

I could send you very entertaining Dialogues, more entertaining than what servants say to one another of their masters, and a good deal more true, and I dare to say still less favourable.

2178. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1782.

I SHOULD have written, Madam, had I had anything to tell you: but what can I send from hence but repetitions of the samenesses of every summer? I pass most of my evenings at the hospital of the poor Montroses; Clifden [Mrs. Clive's] is little less an infirmary. I have dined again with the Princess Amelie, and twice with the Hertfords at Ditton, and see a great deal of my family, who are cantoned around me like those of a patriarch, when tribes began to increase and remove to small distances. My brother [Sir Edward Walpole] is at Isleworth, Lady Dysart at Ham, the Keppels at the Stud, the Waldegraves at the Pavilions, and Lady Malpas in the Palace;[1] but I am not the better stocked with materials for letters; nor, though the neighbourhood is enriched by some invention, as Lady Cecilia Johnston's at Petersham, and Lady Bridget Tollemache's on Ham Common, is my Gazette at all flourishing, since we have ceased to be on the high road to intelligence. Lord North finding Bushy Park too solitary since his sun was set, is gone on a progress into the Tory regions of Oxford and Staffordshire; and Mr. [Welbore] Ellis has moulted his French horns with the seals. The events of our district have been confined to the death of Mr. Prado,[2] the marriage of Miss Pococke, the death and will of Mr. Child, which have occupied us more than the hide and seek of the hostile fleets. Bankruptcies, houses to be sold or let, and robberies every night, fill up the Gazette of our neighbourhood, but would make dull journals into another country. I have forsworn politics, and have no connection with the next generation. I know nothing of what the Prince of Wales does; and for him who only *undoes*, I am like his Laureat, and talk of anything rather than of him.

George [Selwyn] and La Mimie called on me half an hour ago; he is gone to pass a day or two with Colonel Keene on Hampton

[1] The Stud, the Pavilions, and the Palace, all refer to Hampton Court.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] "My neighbour Prado, of the tribe of Issachar." Walpole to Ossory, Sept. 14, 1774. See vol. vi., p. 116.—CUNNINGHAM.

Court Green; so the fall of a party can make people as fond of one another, as two Englishmen, that are perfect strangers, if they happen to meet in China! George is all afflictions; the Duke of Queensberry has broken a tendon, and Mrs. Webbe is dying. I love him so well that I hope he will never have greater calamities.

Lady Chewton is a very good young woman, Madam, and I rejoice that Lord and Lady Waldegrave are satisfied with her. Lady Sefton's politics must be admirable: Mrs. Bouverie, I hear, is a great politician too. The trade will grow more entertaining if the ladies make it the fashion: it was become as much a profession of calculation as that of a banker's shop. I do not know what it would not become, since *honest* Colonel Barré has established a drawback for principles.

I was indeed, Madam, excessively diverted with 'The Agreeable Surprise:'[1] it is excellent nonsense, and very original. Whatever is so, has great merit in my eyes: I would not give sixpence a ream for what Mr. Hayley and such copyists write. I am sorry you are to pay half as much for this letter, Madam, but what can I do? I have condemned myself to pass the end of my life as insipidly as I possibly can; and yet, since you will have the goodness to recollect me, I cannot give up gratitude, as I have all entertainment; but when I have told you that I am grateful, I have nothing else worth telling you of your ever devoted,

H. W

2179. TO CHARLES BEDFORD, ESQ.

DEAR SIR: *Strawberry Hill, Aug.* 12, 1782.

I YESTERDAY received from Mr. Rose the following order:—

"Sir,—I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to desire you will forthwith cause to be made out and transmitted to me for their Lordships' information,—

"An account of the ordinary allowance of stationery delivered into this office in the year 1780; together with the prices of each article, and the amount of the whole.

"An account of the extraordinary allowance of stationery, and all other necessaries whatsoever, delivered to the Lords, Secretary, Clerks, or any other person in this office, within the same time; together with the prices of each article, and the amount of the whole. "I am, sir, &c.,

"*Treasury Chambers, 10th Aug.*, 1782." "GEORGE ROSE."

I beg, dear Sir, that you will immediately make out the accounts

[1] A farce by O'Keeffe produced at the Haymarket in September, 1781.—CUNNINGHAM.

required with the most rigid exactness and truth. I have, you know, nothing to disguise or palliate, and I wish you to be over-minute rather than omit anything. The whole world is welcome to know everything relating to my office. I have never, in above forty years that I have enjoyed the office, made or sought to make the smallest advantage of it beyond my just and legal dues. I have never solicited any favour in it, and, as you know, constantly ordered your father and you to take care that the office was served in the best manner, and that the goods I supplied should be purchased of the most substantial tradesmen, and for which I constantly paid the best prices. In short, I have always acted in my office in a manner so much to my credit, that I should be glad to have my conduct scrutinised in the most rigid way; but of that say nothing—I desire no parade or ostentation.[1]

When you have drawn up the accounts as faithfully as you can possibly, pray bring them hither to me before you deliver them. In the meantime I would have you call immediately on Mr. Rose, and tell him, with my compliments, that the orders shall be obeyed as fast as you can, and *that I have directed you to be as minute, exact, and particular as possible.* Say those very words

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.[2]

[1] "My deputy received my most positive orders to give to the Commissioners the most particular detail of my profits, and to offer them in my name my account-books of all my receipts, which they declined accepting, and which would have shown them a very different state of the medium of my place. Had they accepted those books, I intended to send them word they were welcome to examine my receipts; but that I hoped, as they were gentlemen, they would not look at the foolish manner in which I had flung away most of what I had received."—*Walpole's Account of his Conduct relative to his Places.* Works, vol. ii. p. 369.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

SIR, *Duke Street, Westminster, Aug.* 16, 1782.

I WAS very much concerned to understand yesterday from Mr. Bedford, that you had considered my letter to him as leading towards an inquiry into the conduct of your office. It was merely to know what the consumption of stationery at the Treasury has been, which I could not learn with correctness there. This I begged Mr. Bedford would assure you of in the strongest terms, to prevent the possibility of your continuing under a mistake with respect to my intention in writing to him; and when I mentioned the misapprehension to Lord Shelburne, he expressed the utmost anxiety to have it set right, and desired I would write to you myself for that purpose, with assurances that it would give him very great pain to have occasioned the smallest uneasiness to you, which I hope you will admit as an apology for my having given you this trouble. I have, &c.,

GEORGE ROSE.

Walpole's reply to Mr. Rose is printed in his Works, vol. ii., p. 388.— CUNNINGHAM.

2180. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 15, 1782.

I AM greatly proud, Madam, of having formed so able a scholar as your Ladyship. Be assured, that you will every day find more comfort in becoming an antiquary. The study of antiquity has a multitude of advantages over other pursuits. All its discoveries produce new lights and no disappointments. They are not doubtful, like the fruits of sciences that depend on reasoning. Is it not charming too, that one may choose one's field of inquiry? You may pursue the conquest of France with Edward and Henry, humble Spain with Queen Bess, or with her, treat the Dutch with haughty kindness. You may plant colonies in America with Drake, Raleigh and Cavendish; subdue Tyrone, and fetch the regal chair from Scone, instead of being on the point of restoring it. Then, by choosing your period, you may choose your party; and in the wars of the Roses change according to the prevailing side, with every revolution. All this naturally follows, if you dive into the secrets of old families. You grow interested about their heroes, and forget our contemporaries and the present state,

——— From what height fallen!

But I will proceed to your interrogatories, Madam. The shield certainly contains the arms and quarterings of a Sydney. Quarter 1st, is Sydney. 2nd, Dudley. 3rd, Somery, or, two lions in pale azure. 4th, Gray. 5th, Beauchamp. 6th, Old Warwick, or and azure, with a chevron ermine, always quartered by the Beauchamps.

The shield, therefore, I conclude to belong to a female Sydney, who married an earl, and thence, perhaps, Frances Countess of Sussex, foundress of Sydney College. There are, I believe, instances of ladies who have given only their own arms; or such a shield might answer to another of her husband, in which were only his arms. Had she impaled his, they would have been impaled, not quartered, on the man's side; but could not possibly be in the last quarter. Nor could the shield, even without the coronet, represent Sir Henry Sydney's widow, who would have impaled her own arms, or if she had borne her own alone, would have given them alone, and not her husband's alone.

Thus, a little too like a genuine antiquary, I have answered your Ladyship's questions, without satisfying your curiosity. Nor could I ever unravel to my own satisfaction the history of Ampthill-Houghton. By the busts in the house, and by the crests in the frieze without, it is certain that it was possessed by the Sydneys. The new discovered shield confirms it; and perhaps does, connected with your Ladyship's postscript, which I have since received by itself, explain the whole. As you have found that Robert the first Earl of Leicester was steward of the manors of Anne of Denmark, and that Ampthill was a jointure manor of Queens, and as one of the busts is of his sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke (the Arcadian), is it not possible, that as the greater Ampthill was the manor-house, Houghton-Ampthill might be a lodge which he lent or obtained a grant of to his sister Lady Pembroke; who, being a Sydney, and more proud of her brother Sir Philip and her own family than of her husband, might decorate the house with her own emblems, and as a sort of foundress leave a shield of her own arms only with the coronet to testify her dignity? I think we used to doubt whether the male bust was her husband's or her brother's, Sir Philip. I prefer this hypothesis to my first idea of the shield belonging to Lady Sussex.

Mightily I am pleased with Mr. Leveson's legacy to Captain Waldegrave. We do not seem in a course that will enrich him by prizes. I had no curiosity about Monsieur de Grasse, though I was in town for two days while he was the object of the moment. To be sure, he was something of a sight; but formerly beaten French admirals were no rarity to us.

Mr. Morrice is gone to some mud-baths, I forget where. Having been turning over my books since your postscript arrived, I must hurry my letter, for I am not dressed, my dinner is ready, my cousin Mr. T. Walpole is with me, and I shall not have time to say more after dinner.

2181. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 16, 1782.

If this letter reaches your Lordship, I believe it must be conveyed by a dove; for we are all under water, and a postman has not where to set the sole of his foot. They tell me, that in the north you have not been so drowned, which will be very fortunate; for in

these parts everything is to be apprehended for the corn, the sheep, and the camps: but, in truth, all kinds of prospects are most gloomy, and even in lesser lights uncomfortable. Here we cannot stir, but armed for battle. Mr. Potts, who lives at Mr. Hindley's, was attacked and robbed last week at the end of Gunnersbury-lane, by five foot-pads who had two blunderbusses. Lady Browne and I do continue going to Twickenham-park; but I don't know how long it will be prudent, nor whether it is so now.

I have not been at Park-place, for Mr. Conway is never there, at least only for a night or two. His regiment was reviewed yesterday at Ashford-common, but I did not go to see it. In truth, I have so little taste for common sights, that I never yet did see a review in my life: I was in town last week, yet saw not Monsieur de Grasse;[1] nor have seen the giant or the dwarf.

Poor Mrs. Clive is certainly very declining, but has been better of late; and, which I am glad of, thinks herself better. All visions that comfort one are desirable: the conditions of mortality do not bear being pryed into; nor am I an admirer of that philosophy that scrutinises into them: the philosophy of deceiving one's self is vastly preferable. What signifies anticipating what we cannot prevent?

I do not pretend to send your Lordship any news, for I do not know a tittle, nor inquire. Peace is the sole event of which I wish to hear. For private news, I have outlived almost all the world with which I was acquainted, and have no curiosity about the next generation, scarce more than about the twentieth century. I wish I was less indifferent, for the sake of the few with whom I correspond, your Lordship in particular, who are always so good and partial to me, and on whom I should indubitably wait, were I fit to take a long journey; but as I walk no better than a tortoise, I make a conscience of not incommodating my friends, whom I should only confine at home. Indeed, both my feet and hands are so lame, that I now scarce ever dine abroad. Being so antiquated and insipid, I will release your Lordship; and am, with my unalterable respects to Lady Strafford, your Lordship's most devoted humble servant.

[1] The Comte de Grasse, the admiral of the French fleet, which Rodney defeated on the 12th of April, 1782, and who had struck his flag in that engagement to the Barfleur, and surrendered himself to Sir Samuel Hood, landed at Portsmouth, as a prisoner of war, on the 5th of August.—Wright.

2182. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 20, 1782.

You know I am too reasonable to expect to hear from you when you are so overwhelmed in business, or to write when I have nothing upon earth to say. I would come to town, but am to have company on Thursday, and am engaged with Lady Cecilia [Johnston] at Ditton on Friday, and on Monday I am to dine and pass the day at Sion-hill; and, as I am twenty years older than anybody of my age, I am forced to rest myself between my parties. I feel this particularly at this moment, and as the allied houses of Lucan and Althorp have just been breakfasting here, and I am sufficiently fatigued.

I have not been at Oatlands for years; for I consider I cannot walk, much less climb a precipice; and the Duke of Newcastle has none of the magnificence of petty princes in a romance or in Germany, of furnishing calashes to those who visit his domains. He is not undetermined about selling the place; but besides that nobody is determined to buy it, he must have Lord Lincoln's consent.

I saw another proud prince yesterday, your cousin Seymour from Paris, and his daughter. She was so dishevelled, that she looked like a pattern doll that had been tumbled at the Custom-house.

I am mighty glad that war is gone to sleep like a paroli at faro, and that the rain has cried itself to death; unless the first would dispose of all the highwaymen, footpads, and housebreakers, or the latter drown them, for nobody hereabouts dare stir after dusk, nor be secure at home. When you have any interval of your little campaigns, I shall hope to see you and Lady Aylesbury here.

2183. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 20, 1782.

I DID think it long since I heard from you; but your letter of July 30th explains your silence, on your ignorance to whom you was to address yourself on the late changes. In fact, no new Secretaries of State were appointed for some time, none therefore could write to you; nor could I tell you who was your new principal, till you had one. Events there have been none to tell you; for the hide-and-

seek at which the combined fleets have been playing with ours, produced none till each returned to its own home. Ours, they say, is to relieve Gibraltar, but I do not answer for the truth. I have been in town but two nights for a great while, and know no better than the newspapers what is passing. I have heard here that we have abandoned Georgia and the Royalists to the mercy of their enemies; but perhaps there is not a word of truth in it. A suburban village is no very authentic coffee-house. Our Jamaica and Leeward fleets are arrived safely. Such articles are very important in war, though they made no figure in the history of a campaign. The fleets might almost sail up hither; for we have had such incessant deluges of rain, that our quiet Thames looks like a little turbulent ocean, and seems setting up for itself too, like others of its sovereign's dominions.

Monsieur de Grasse has been here, and was graciously treated; which is more than it is thought he will be at home. I hope he will not be used as inhumanly as poor Admiral Byng, whose fate the French so justly condemned.[1]

I shall be very sorry if your attendance on the Duchess of Parma has over-fatigued you: may you be quit for the ennui which such ceremonies must create after a certain age! I never feel my antiquity so much as when I am obliged to appear at any of those functions. Courts were not made for old age; it requires all the giddy insensibility of youth not to be struck with such farces. How one should smile if one could look down on a crowd of insects acting importance, dignity, or servility! And how would one of them reciprocally smile, could they observe one of our species tottering to the last to so foolish a pantomime! The young are a sort of insects who do remark that foolishness in their seniors—and they are in the right. Most things are excusable in youth, and almost all things become them. Few become the old but propriety, and that kind of quiet common-sense that avoids particularities, and dreads to make itself talked of. Thus it would be affectation in you, who wear a public character, not to conform to its duties. But

[1] Count de Grasse landed at Portsmouth on the fifth of August, where he, together with his officers, were most hospitably entertained by Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Parker, until the count had permission to proceed to London. During his stay in the metropolis, he took up his residence at the Royal Hotel, in Pall-Mall. The Count was the first commander-in-chief of a French fleet or army who had been prisoner in England since the reign of Queen Anne, when Marshall Tallard was taken by the Duke of Marlborough, and confined to the town and environs of Nottingham. On his return to France, the count published a 'Mémoire Justificatif.'—Wright.

when I see men late in life thrust themselves into the world's face without a call, I feel a contemptuous pity for them—but they are always punished: they find themselves misplaced; and, the more they try to adapt themselves to the tone of an age to which they belong not, the more awkwardly they succeed. Not only the fashions in dress and manners change, but the ways of thinking, nay, of speaking and pronouncing. Even the taste in beauty and wit alters. A Helen, or a Lord Rochester, perhaps, would not be approved but in one specific half-century. Sir William Temple says, that the Earl of Norwich,[1] who had been the wit of the Court of Charles I., was laughed at in that of Charles II. I myself remember that Lord Leicester,[2] who had rather a jargon than wit, which was much admired in his day, having retired for a few years, and returning to town after a new generation had come about, recommenced his old routine, but was taken for a driveller by the new people in fashion, who neither understood his phrases nor allusions. At least, neither man nor woman that has been in vogue must hazard an interregnum, and hope to resume the sceptre. An actor or actress that is a favourite may continue on the stage a long time; their decays are not descried, at least not allowed by those who grow old along with them; and the young, who come into the world one by one, hearing such performers applauded, believe them perfect, instead of criticising; but if they quit the stage for a few years, and return to it, a large crop of new auditors has taken possession, are struck with the increased defects, and do not submit, when in a body, to be told by the aged that such a performer is charming, when they hear and see to the contrary.

I wrote this two days ago, but have heard nothing to add. The war seems to partake of old age, and to be grown inactive—I wish it may be grown so old as to die soon. Sir William Draper, some weeks ago, preferred a complaint in form against General Murray; but the Judge Advocate said it was not sufficiently specific. I believe he has given one now less general; but the cause cannot be tried yet for want of Colonel Pringle, who was hostage for the transport vessels. The King's youngest son, Prince Alfred, was at the point of death this morning. He is not two years old. Adieu!

[1] George Goring, Earl of Norwich, died 1662; of whom we have more than one fine half-length by Vandyck.—Cunningham.

[2] Thomas Coke, created, in 1725, Lord Lovel of Minster-Lovel, in Oxfordshire, and, in 1744, Viscount Coke of Holkham and Earl of Leicester, which titles became extinct at his death in 1759.—Wright.

2184. TO CHARLES BEDFORD, ESQ.[1]

DEAR SIR: *Strawberry Hill, Aug.* 23, 1782.

I HAVE received so very civil and obliging a letter from Mr. Rose, that I will not give you the trouble of bringing the account down hither, but will desire you to deliver it to him on Monday morning, and tell him that I have ordered you to give him at any time any information that he wishes to have, as far as you have it, or can be informed yourself.

I believe I shall not be able to be in town before the end of next week, but you shall know on what day as soon as I can fix it.

I am, dear Sir, yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2185. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Friday evening, Aug. 30, 1782.

I HAVE this moment received from London your letter which Cardini brought, and shall send one of my servants to town to-morrow morning with this answer, and conclude he will not be set out on his return. As it will not go unless by him, I can have no difficulty of writing freely to you; and yet you will be surprised at the very little information I can give you. In short, I have totally done with politics—even with thinking on them, when I can help it. This country is absolutely lost. I mean, past recovery. The phrensy of the American war was pushed so far and so long, that, besides flinging away all we had acquired in near two centuries, doors have been thrown open to a thousand collateral misfortunes. Our credit has been screwed to a pitch that imminently endangers it all. There is an enormous debt yet unprovided for; nevertheless, the vast current expense continues. Ireland has shaken us off—not unfortunately, *if it goes no farther;* for it will flourish, which our jealousy hindered. Scotland, after doing us every mischief to the end of the last reign, and after engrossing everything in the present, seems to be at the eve of setting up for itself too. When it was little to be expected, at least not five months before, a change

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

happened in the spring, which delivered us at last from so criminal an Administration. The new one, it is true, was but ill-cemented, and was dissolved by Lord Rockingham's death in three months; and in three days the remainder split to pieces.

I confess I had neither youth nor perseverance enough to form any new plan of hopes for my country. I took the resolution of abandoning even speculation and observation; and now, literally, never so much as ask a political question. I have no quarrels, no enemies. I wish most heartily well to Mr. Conway and the Duke of Richmond; I have always been civilly and obligingly treated by Lord Shelburne, therefore there is no disgust in my conduct: but I am so mortified at the fall of England, I see so little or no prospect of its ever being a great nation again, that I have not courage to hope about it. I have outlived the glory of my family and of my country. Houghton and England are alike stripped of all their honours.—But, instead of declamation, I will answer your letter.

Gibraltar, I am persuaded, will follow Minorca, if not already gone. So far from the fleet being sailed to its relief, part is gone in pursuit of the Dutch to the Baltic, though the Dutch are really in the Texel. I truly do not know what has occasioned this strange management. The papers ring with dissensions in the Fleet; but the particulars I have not heard, for I have not been in London this month. Rodney, too, let the French fleet, that he had beaten and cooped up, slip out; which will probably occasion the loss of New York. The East Indies are not secure either. Mr. Fitzherbert[1] is gone to Paris to treat. When they have quite ruined us, perhaps they may grant us a peace.

This is a summary of our situation, and of that of my mind; the latter certainly is not important enough to be blended with the former, but was absolutely necessary to explain why I can tell you so little, and to prevent your concluding that there is some mystery or reserve in my behaviour: but as no changes make any either in my principles or fortune, you may be very sure that I am sincere, and that my politics have never had any object but first, the liberty, and then, the honour of my country. My friends have more than once succeeded; yet I have never accepted or asked the smallest emolument for myself. I may then, at sixty-five, say that I have never varied; but one may be tired out—I am, I own; and though

[1] Alleyne Fitzherbert created, 1801, Baron St. Helen's, died, 1839, in the Isle of Wight.—Cunningham.

I never meant to profit by the splendour of my country, I cannot be so fond of it in its depression and rags.

I shall continue to send you any striking novelties; though, by the account I have given you of myself, I must become a less valuable correspondent. Indifference is not a good ingredient in letters —I think, in nothing; no, not where it is demanded, and commonly pretended, in History. But, if the writer does not keep his word, neither is the reader displeased; nay, if he is, it is only because the Historian is not partial on the same side as his reader.

We have had the most deplorably wet summer that ever I remember, after three hotter than any in my memory. But I may as well finish when I have nothing better to talk of than the weather; it shows what a retired and insipid mortal I am.

I frequently ask Mrs. Noel, whom I see often at Twickenham Park, about your nephew; but she has only heard of him once at a cricket-match, a proof of his being well. Cardini assured me, by a line, that he left you so, which he knew would be the most welcome news he could give me: and, if he saw me, he would carry you as favourable an account of me; for, though I think myself older than anybody of my age, my health in general is very good, and I am content with it; and, though my spirits are less nimble than they were, they are never low. Adieu! my dear Sir. Shall not we be very venerable in the annals of friendship? What Orestes and Pylades ever wrote to each other for four-and-forty years without once meeting? Adieu!

2186. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 31, 1782.

It is very strange indeed, Madam, that you should make me excuses for writing, or think that I have anything better or even more urgent to do than to read your letters. It is very true that the Duchess de la Valliere, in a hand which I could not decypher, has recommended Count Soltikoff and his wife to me; but, oh! my shame, I have not yet seen them. I did mean to go to town to-day on purpose, but I have had the gout in my right eyelid, and it was swelled yesterday as big as a walnut; being now shrunk to less than a pistachio, I propose in two or three days to make my appearance, and plead my eye's big belly. Luckily the Countess was born in

England, the daughter of the former Czernichew, and she is in such terrors of highwaymen, that I shall be quit for a breakfast; so it is an ill highwayman that blows nobody good. In truth it would be impossible in this region to amass a set of company for dinner to meet them. The Hertfords, Lady Holdernesse, and Lady Mary Coke did dine here on Thursday, but were armed as if going to Gibraltar; and Lady Cecilia Johnston would not venture even from Petersham—for in the town of Richmond they rob even before dusk—to such perfection are all the arts brought! Who would have thought that the war with America would make it impossible to stir from one village to another? yet so it literally is. The Colonies took off all our commodities down to highwaymen. Now being forced to mew and then turn them out like pheasants, the roads are stocked with them, and they are so tame that they even come into houses.

I have just been reading a most entertaining book, which I will recommend to you as you are grown antiquaries: I don't know whether it is published yet, for the author sent it to me. Part was published some time ago in the 'Archæologia,' and is almost the only paper in that mass of rubbish that has a grain of common sense. It is 'Mr. E. King on ancient Castles.' You will see how comfortably and delectably our potent ancestors lived when in the constant state of war to which we are coming. Earls, barons, and their fair helpmates lived pell-mell in dark dungeons with their own soldiers, as the poorest cottagers do now with their pigs. I shall repent decking Strawberry so much, if I must turn it into a garrison.

Mr. Vernon was your Ladyship's informant about the Soltikoffs; but he gave me more credit for my intended civilities than I deserved. The French do not conceive when they address strangers to us, that we do not at all live in their style. It is no trouble to them, who have miscellaneous dinners or suppers, to ask one or two more; nor are they at any expense in language, as everybody speaks French. In the private way in which I live, it is troublesome to give a formal dinner to foreigners, and more so to find company for them in a circle of dowagers, who would only jabber English scandal out of the 'Morning Post.'

Mr. Fitzroy Scudamore, by a very old Will, gives everything to his daughter, consequently to Lord Surrey, who gets above 40,000*l.* An estate of 1200*l.* a year goes to Lord Southampton, if Lady Surrey has no children. To two or three very old servants he has

not left a farthing—it is no excuse that the Will is of ancient date—why did not he make a later?

You are not serious, Madam, that Mr. Fox is going to Gibraltar! Is he to be Alexander at Oxydracæ, as well as at Statira's feet? But he may save himself the trouble; I should think the town gone by this time—which is more than our fleet is. Just this moment I hear the shocking loss of the 'Royal George!' AdmiralKempenfeldt is a loss indeed; but I confess I feel more for the hundreds of poor babes who have lost their parents! If one grows ever so indifferent, some new calamity calls one back to this deplorable war! If one is willing to content one's self in a soaking autumn with a match broken, or with the death of a Prince Duodecimus, a clap of thunder awakens one, and one hears that Britain herself has lost an arm or a leg. I have been expecting a deluge, and a famine, and such casualties as enrich a Sir Richard Baker; but we have all King David's options at once! and what was his option before he was anointed, freebooting too?

Drowned as we are, the country never was in such beauty; the herbage and leafage are luxurious. The Thames gives itself Rhone airs, and almost foams; it is none of your home-brewed rivers that Mr. Brown makes with a spade and a watering-pot. *Apropos*, Mr. Duane,[1] like a good housewife in the middle of his grass-plot, has planted a pump and a watering-trough for his cow, and I suppose on Saturdays dries his towels and neckcloths on his orange-trees; but I must have done, or the post will be gone.

2187. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[2]

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 7, 1782.

I AM most impatient, my dear Lord, for an account of the conclusion of all the various and great works carrying on at Nuneham. I am earnest to hear that the house is finished, that the tower designed by Mr. Mason is ready to receive my painted glass, that he has written several novelties, and is coming to make me a visit as he promised, and that Lady Harcourt has settled, and had transcribed the MS. that I am to print. These things, and perhaps a great many more, I conclude, have been pursued with unremitting diligence, as no soul has had a moment's time to send me a line;

[1] See vol. ii., p. 404.—CUNNINGHAM.
[2] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

though Mr. Mason is so punctual a correspondent, that I know he would not have been so long silent, if he had not been so occupied by the works at Nuneham, which, he knows, I prefer to my own satisfaction. However, as all must be terminated in two or three days, I beg that the first holiday after the masons, bricklayers, upholsterers, Muses, and amanuenses are paid off, that somebody or other will tell me the society are well, and have not broke their necks off a scaffold, nor their bones by a fall from Pegasus.

By my little specimen in Strawberry, I guess that Nuneham is in the highest beauty. As a whole, Summer has been spent on decorating Autumn with verdure, leaves, and rivers. Your Lordship's Thames must be brimful. I never saw it such a Ganges at this time of year: it is none of your home-brewed rivers that people make with a drain, half a bridge, and a clump of evergreens, and then overlay with the model of a ship.

I know nothing, for I live as if I were just arrived from Syria, and were performing quarantine. Nobody dares stir out of their own house. We are robbed and murdered if we do but step over the threshold to the chandler's shop for a pennyworth of plums. Lady Mary Mordaunt is at Petersham with Lady Cecilia [Johnstone], and they are to dine here next week, if Admiral Milbank is returned from the Baltic, and they can obtain a convoy. Dame Clivden is the only heroine amongst all us old dowagers: she is so much recovered that she ventures to go out cruising on all the neighbours, and has made a miraculous draught of fishes.[1]

My nieces are gone to Hackwood, and thence are to meet their sister and Lord Chewton at Weymouth. I have heard a whisper of a little miscarriage: it must have been a very small one. The Duchess [of Gloucester], when I heard last, was at Lausanne, but going to Geneva, and intended a visit to Madame de Virri, who is within three hours of the former. I do not know whither bound next.

Has your Lordship seen Mr. Tyrwhitt's book in answer to Mr. Bryant and Dr. Archimage? It is as good as arguments and proofs can be after what is much better, wit and ridicule. As Mr. Mason is absorbed in 'Fresnoy' and Associations, I conclude he does not condescend to look at such trifles as 'Archæologic Epistles,' and 'Dissertations on the language of Chaucer.'

Charles Fox is languishing at the feet of Mrs. Robinson. George

[1] Mrs. Clive's career made good a line in Pope:—
"A youth of folly, an old age of cards."
—Cunningham.

Selwyn says, "Who should the *Man of the People* live with, but with the *Woman of the People?*" Tonton sends his compliments to Druid, and I am the whole sacre Grove's devoted

H. W.

2188. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 8, 1782.

Two days after your letter by Cardini, I received yours of the 17th of last month, which you had written before that by him, but which, as you foresaw, his diligence would precede. I now write merely to answer what you say about Mozzi's business, for I do not know a tittle of news.

As the Cavalier is coming himself, I saw no cause of delivering his letter to Mr. Duane: however, as he had mentioned it to Sharpe, I did deliver it; and the next day received another from Sharpe, of Mozzi to him, with his own opinion, that I should either take the whole on myself, or accept of Mr. Duane. I confess, this shuffling did provoke me, and I have given it to Sharpe pretty roundly. I told him, that when I proposed Mr. Duane, he (Sharpe) would not consent, though Lucas had approved of him. I was glad thus to sow division between these two. From my Lord [Orford] I expect no justice: but I will let him and them hear the truth whenever I have occasion. I never trouble myself about him or them but when they come across me, though the usage I have received from all would exasperate a cooler temper than mine.

To this moment my Lord [Orford] has not paid my brother or me a shilling of our fortunes, though bound by bond to pay us on his mother's death; nor sixpence of the interest, though due from the date of the bonds. When he sold the collection of pictures at Houghton, he declared at St. James's that he was forced to it, to pay the fortunes of his uncles—which amounted but to ten thousand pounds; and he sold the pictures for forty, grievously to our discontent, and without any application from us for our money, which he now retains, trusting that we will not press him, lest he should disinherit us, were we to outlive him. But we are not so silly as to have any such expectations at our ages; nor, as he has sold the pictures, which we wished to have preserved in the family, do we care what he does with the estate. Would you believe—yes, for he is a madman—that he is refurnishing Houghton; ay, and with pictures, too—and by Cipriani? That flimsy scene-painter is

to replace Guido, Claude Lorraine, Rubens, Vandyke, Carlo Maratti, Albano, Le Sueur, &c.; and with subjects out of Homer and Dryden's Fables, selected and directed by his Lordship himself. But enough! it is madness to dwell on Bedlam actuated by attorneys!

I am perfectly ignorant of the state of the war abroad; they say we are in no pain for Gibraltar: but I know that we are in a state of war at home that is shocking. I mean, from the enormous profusion of housebreakers, highwaymen, and footpads; and, what is worse, from the savage barbarities of the two latter, who commit the most wanton cruelties. This evil is another fruit of the American war. Having no vent for the convicts that used to be transported to our late colonies, a plan was adopted for confining them on board of lighters for the term of their sentences. In those colleges, undergraduates in villany commence Masters of Arts, and at the expiration of their studies issue as mischievous as if they had taken their degrees in law, physic, or divinity, at one of our regular universities; but, having no profession, nor testimonial to their characters, they can get no employment, and therefore live upon the public. In short, the grievance is so crying, that one dare not stir out after dinner but well-armed. If one goes abroad to dinner, you would think one was going to the relief of Gibraltar. You may judge how depraved we are, when the war has not consumed half the reprobates, nor press-gangs thinned their numbers! But no wonder—how should the morals of the people be purified, when such frantic dissipation reigns above them? Contagion does not mount, but descend. A new theatre is going to be erected merely for people of fashion, that they may not be confined to vulgar hours —that is, to day or night. Fashion is always silly, for, before it can spread far, it must be calculated for silly people; as examples of sense, wit, or ingenuity could be imitated only by a few. All the discoveries that I can perceive to have been made by the present age, is to prefer riding about the streets rather than on the roads or on the turf, and being too late for everything. Thus, though we have more public diversions than would suffice for two capitals, nobody goes to them till they are over. This is literally true. Ranelagh, that is, the music there, finishes at half an hour after ten at night; but the most fashionable set out for it, though above a mile out of town, at eleven or later. Well! but is not this censure being old and cross? were not the charming people of my youth guilty of equivalent absurdities? Oh, yes; but the sensible folks of

my youth had not lost America, nor dipped us in wars with half Europe, that cost us fifteen millions a year. I believe the Jews went to Ranelagh at midnight, though Titus was at Knightsbridge. But Titus demolished their Ranelagh as well as Jerusalem. Adieu!

2189. TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 15, 1782.

I CONGRATULATE your Lordship on the acquisition of a valuable picture by Jameson. The 'Memoirs' of your Society I have not yet received; but, when I do, shall read it with great pleasure, and beg your Lordship to offer my grateful thanks to the members, and to accept them yourself.

No literature appears here at this time of the year. London, I hear, is particularly empty. Not only the shooting season is begun, but, till about seventeen days ago, there was nothing but incessant rains, and not one summer's day. A Catalogue, in two quartos, of the Manuscripts in the British Museum [Ayscough's], and which thence does not seem to contain great treasures, and Mr. Tyrwhitt's book on the Rowleian controversy, which is reckoned completely victorious, are all the novelties I have seen since I left town. War and politics occupy those who think at all—no great number neither; and most of those, too, are content with the events of the day, and forget them the next. But it is too like an old man to blame the age; and, as I have nothing to do with it, I may as well be silent and let it please itself. I am, with great regard, my Lord, yours, &c.

2190. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1782.

I HAD not time yesterday to say what I had to say about your coming hither. I should certainly be happy to see you and Lady Aylesbury at any time; but it would be unconscionable to expect it when you have scarce a whole day in a month to pass at your own house, and to look after your own works. Friends, I know, lay as great stress upon trifles as upon serious points; but as there never was a more sincere attachment than mine, so it is the most reasonable one too, for I always think for you more than myself. Do whatever you have to do, and be assured, that is what I like best that you

should do. The present hurry cannot last always. Your present object is to show how much more fit you are for your post[1] than any other man; by which you will do infinite service too, and will throw a great many private acts of good-nature and justice into the account. Do you think I would stand in the way of any of these things? and that I am not aware of them? Do you think about me? If it suits you at any moment, come. Except Sunday next, when I am engaged to dine abroad, I have nothing to do till the middle of October, when I shall go to Nuneham; and, going or coming, may possibly catch you at Park-place.

I am not quite credulous about your turning smoke into gold:[2] it is perhaps because I am ignorant. I like Mr. Mapleton extremely; and though I have lived so long that I have little confidence, I think you could not have chosen one more likely to be faithful. I am sensible that my kind of distrust would prevent all great enterprises; and yet I cannot but fear, that unless one gives one's self up entirely to the pursuit of a new object, this risk must be doubled. But I will say no more; for I do not even wish to dissuade you, as I am sure I understand nothing of the matter, and therefore mean no more than to keep your discretion awake.

The tempest of Monday night alarmed me too for the fleet: and as I have nothing to do but to care, I feel for individuals as well as for the public, and think of all those who may be lost, and of all those who may be made miserable by such loss. Indeed, I care most for individuals; for as to the public, it seems to be totally insensible to everything! I know nothing worth repeating; and having now answered all your letter, shall bid you good night.

2191. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1782.

You are a very wayward brother, and were not I the sweetest tempered angel upon earth, we should infallibly quarrel; you have broken your word and then grow sulky because you are in the wrong. I have tempted you and scolded you, and *agacèd* you indirectly to no purpose, but I know how to punish you out of your own law-book, which orders one most charitably to heap coals of fire on those who

[1] Mr. Conway was now commander-in-chief.—Wright.

[2] Alluding to the coke-ovens, for which Mr. Conway afterwards obtained a patent. —Wright.

are to blame. This suits my disposition, too, better than pouting, for I have so little time left that I am resolved not to throw any of it away upon ill-humour. So if your majestic silence is to last, the Lord knows why! you must be cross alone, for I shall appear at Nuneham next month when I am summoned, and be as glad to see you as if you was the most reasonable person in the world.

The newspapers say that Mr. Stratford's Play of 'Lord Russell,' has been offered and accepted at Drury Lane. I conclude, cut for the stage by Master Doctor Cumberland, who I know had taken it in hand. What a delicious potion must a bumper of red-hot lava smoking from Vesuvius be, when extinguished by a double quantity of the coldest aconite! But how can the royalist empiric have been able to convert a whig bonfire into an illumination to the honour of Majesty, oh! yes, such things may be: I have seen such.

If you have a mind that this letter should be longer, you must suppose that the two following pages are filled with accounts of robberies and murders. I know enough, and know nothing else, but as half of them are lies, you may as well imagine them as read the inventions. The papers are so full of lies that I have lately proposed as an economic plan, that every family should invent its own gazette. The housekeeper might give it out with the napkins in a morning, and it would serve for the day as well as what the newsman brings. I like this way too of giving you *charte blanche*, because it is an exact answer to your two or three letters which you have never written. Adieu![1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Nuneham, Sept. 26, 1782.

I CONFESS myself to be the most atrocious of epistolary sinners, and after so short yet so plenary a confession have nothing further to say than to beg your absolution, which perhaps you will the more readily grant when I give you the *verbum sacerdotis*, that if I had been less sinful I should only have been the more dull, for having had nothing to say that could in any sort have amused you, my letters must consequently have been worse than no letters at all; and if you want further proof take it from this, which will be a just specimen of what its two predecessors would have been had they come into existence and been born in due time.

Our *lambris dorée*, and all our other Frencherys, go on so slowly, that I have my doubts whether we shall be able to receive the party that you were to have come with this next month; and if you should chuse to come alone, we have an English dead-white painter, who would presently give you the head-ache or stomach-ache, and drive you away again. In short, I see so little chance of meeting you here that I am planning a scheme with Stonhewer (who is here for a few days) of leaving this place about the 20th of October, and, if he can be then in London, of going to Aum, and from thence of visiting you at Strawberry; but this must be done between the 20th and 28th, for on the 30th I must be at York. All this I dare not tell

2192. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 25, 1782.

I DO not at all guess when this letter will set out; for I do not know when I shall have anything to put into it, except an answer to one or two points of yours of the 15th of this month, which I have received this morning so soon, that I suppose the East-wind must have brought it himself. I cannot tell why your nephew neglected so many posts; I neither believe him ill nor on the road to Florence, either of which I think I should have heard from Mrs. Noel: but I shall see her this evening at Twickenham Park, and will ask her. *My* nephew, who *is* going to you, has not so much reason for that journey. He was disappointed of preferment when

Lord Harcourt, who I know expects me to stay here till the last moment. His Lordship has got over from Paris with a print of the Tombeau of Jean Jacques, and another of his introduction into the Champes Elysées, a French poem on *Jardins*;[1] but as it is gone to Oxford to be bound, I can give you no further account of it, except that he holds with Sir W. Chambers that the Chinese are our models. The author's name I have also forgot; but as the notes to my new edition of my 'English Garden' are not printed off, I shall perhaps add one *sur son sujet*, if on reading him I find him worth notice or notifying; which puts me in mind to ask you whether you have thought it worth while to notify King Stephen's watch, which I hear is printed as a pamphlet, and most impudently attributed to your humble servant, whose back (Heaven be thanked) is broad enough to bear all booksellers' flams whatever. You shall hear from me again when I can fix my journey, for, as I said before, I despair of seeing you here, though the Lord and the Lady do not, who are as much yours as

Your dutiful though remiss servant,
W. M.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, Nov. 23, 1782.

IT is high time that I should advertise you that I have commenced a new quarter's Residence here, which will continue till the 11th of next February, and that I am now starving myself in a cold cathedral, that I may enjoy the sunshine of the following August, Sept., and Oct., which may perhaps disappoint me as much as the three last did. I supplicate in the meantime your correspondence: "Off youre charitie write to the soule of William Mason, clerk, which residethe in York thre calendere moneths, off whose wretched estate I praye you have mercie." As to any return I can make you, you are not to look for it, except perhaps about the 19th of next month, when a county meeting may perhaps give my dulness, and the dulness of the place, a fillip. I know not whether I spell right or no. The winter here sets in so severely, that, if it does so in the South, I fancy it has ere this driven you from Strawberry to Berkeley-square. Pray write soon, and believe me always,

Most truly yours,
W. MASON.

[1] 'Les Jardins, ou l'Art d'Embellir les Paysages.' Poème par M. l'Abbé de Lisle. Madame de Genlis, in her Memoirs, is very severe on this poem.—MITFORD.

Lord Shelburne, with whom he had connected himself, was made Secretary of State. However, Mr. Fox, who had the other Seals, named Lord Cholmondeley for the embassy to Berlin. When those two Ministers quarrelled, Lord Cholmondeley thought it became him to follow Mr. Fox, and resigned his unenjoyed post. This is what I have heard; for I have not seen him since the affair happened, nor am I of his privy council.

At night.

I have been at the Duchess of Montrose's. Mrs. Noel knew nothing of your nephew; but Miss Howe, who was there too, had a letter to-day from her sister, General Pitt's wife,[1] who is at the camp at Cox-heath, and happened to say that your nephew was there the day before yesterday with the son and daughter of your brother Edward; so, t'other Sir Horace is neither ill nor on the road to you. I hope you know so from himself before this.

We are in no pain for Gibraltar. There are accounts of Lord Howe having passed Lisbon. We reckon that the Bourbonian princes will have made but a foolish jaunt. Our rich fleet from the Baltic is arrived with all the stores we wanted. This is the sum total of our present news, and the relief of Gibraltar will probably be all we shall have this season. By the silence of new letters from New York, the fable of Colonies revolting from the Congress is quite annihilated. Everything is mighty quiet here; and as the Parliament does not meet till the very end of November, I shall probably have very little to tell you for the next two months.

I am not sorry that your influenza ended in a little gout, which will quite carry it off. I have great respect for the gout, though it has broken my limbs to pieces, like the rack; but it is like the Turk, it seldom

"——bears a brother near the throne."—[Pope.]

I am afraid it will not cure a famine. We expected one from a very different cause—from heat and drought. In this region of humidity never was so wet a summer as the present; but we had a parenthesis of fine weather for ten days, that housed most of the corn, of which there was plenty. Grass and leaves we have in such abundance, that our landscapes are even uncommonly luxuriant.

[1] General Sir William Augustus Pitt, K.B., brother to George Lord Rivers, married Mary, sister of Richard the fourth Viscount Howe.—Wright.

Nebuchadnezzar, who used to eat his dominions, would here be the most opulent prince upon earth.

Our papers say, Lady Hamilton[1] is dead at Naples. I am very scrry for her; but I hope, as she was a good fortune in land, that Sir William loses nothing by her death. If you write to him, pray mention my concern.

30th.

My answers to your last would be so mouldy if I detained this any longer, that I determine to send it away. I might keep it back to the end of the week, by which time some account of Lord Howe and Gibraltar is expected; but that event may reach you before my letter could. I shall content myself if I am able to wish you joy; for I reckon Gibraltar in your department, especially as your vigilance and activity extend themselves to every possible duty that you can hook into your province.

2193. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Oct. 1, 1782.

So far from being your gazetteer, Madam, I believe I shall be nothing but your echo, for I can only repeat or reply to the paragraphs you send me. I know nothing new, nay, nor anything old that is new. Mr. Churchill and my sister have been with me; I made a little assembly for them, and lighted up my Gallery, but the terrors of highwaymen are so prevalent that I could muster but two cribbage and one commerce table. If partridge-shooting is not turned into robber-shooting, there will be an end of all society!

I admire Lady Westmorland's delicacy in her toasts. Indeed, I am so ignorant in the fashions of the world that *is* come, that I thought toasting was quite left off, except by the volunteers in Ireland, and by some of your parsons who probe venison, and calculate how many stone of fat will come to their share: but fashions alter! I should not wonder if it grew the *ton* to sell bargains.

I know not whether the episcopal earl [Bristol] had any hand in ordaining Lord *Russell* for the stage, but I conclude *Dr.* Cumberland had; at least I am sure he had undertaken to correct it. How curious must the produce be of frenzy steeped in laudanum!

[1] Miss Barlow. See vol. vi., p. 456.—Cunningham.

'Cecilia'[1] I did read, but, besides its being immeasurably long, and written in Dr. Johnson's unnatural phrase, I liked it far less than 'Evelina.' I did delight in Mr. Briggs, and in the droll names he calls the proud gentleman, whose name I forget. Morris, too, is well, and Meadows tolerable, and Lady Something Something and Miss Something; but all the rest are *outrés*. The great fault is that the authoress is so afraid of not making all her *dramatis personæ* set in character, that she never lets them say a syllable but what is to mark their character, which is very unnatural, at least in the present state of things, in which people are always aiming to disguise their ruling passions, and rather affect opposite qualities, than hang out their propensities. The old religious philosopher is a lunatic, and contributing nothing to the story, might be totally omitted, and had better be so. But I am most offended at the want of poetical justice. The proud gentleman and his proud wife ought to be punished and humbled; whereas the wife is rather exhibited as an amiable character. To say the truth, the last volume is very indifferent.

The vindication of the Governor of Barbadoes was quite lost upon me, who had never interested myself in his story, nor even know of what he was accused. I am a prodigious economist of my memory, and never load it with details about people and things for which I do not care a straw. This is meant with no disrespect for your Ladyship's information, for which I am obliged, as you see it has furnished me with five lines; a great object in my present sterility! My barrenness is much increased by shutting my ears to politics, to which I never will listen more. I was accustomed to a flourishing free kingdom; I had extended my ideas to empire—I cannot contract them to a fragment of a bankrupt island which has gamed away its fortune, and learned all the tricks of a ruined gamester. We are totally degenerated in every respect, which I suppose is the case of all falling states. In what do we shine? Saving the respect that I have for youth, I do not think the present blossoms are entertaining. They may amuse themselves very well, but surely they are not ingenious nor contribute to enliven us. I think I could still be diverted, if the complexion of the times furnished matter; but I certainly cannot divert your Ladyship when my own mind stagnates for want of something to put it in motion.

Princess Amelie told Lady Margaret Compton two days ago, that

[1] By Miss Burney.—CUNNINGHAM.

Mr. Morrice had recovered the use of his legs: I don't know how her Royal Highness heard it.

I have now replied paragraph by paragraph to your letter, Madam, as if saying my Catechism, and given reasons of the faith that is in me; but as good boys are commonly dull, perhaps you would prefer a correspondent that played truant, and told you a few fibs.

Have you seen in the papers the excellent letter of Paul Jones to Sir Joseph Yorke? *Elle nous dit bien des verités!* I doubt poor Sir Joseph cannot answer them! Dr. Franklin himself, I should think, was the author. It is certainly written by a first-rate pen, and not by a common man-of-war. The 'Royal George' is out of luck!

I have told a lie: the 'Royal George' is *in* luck. I have this minute received a letter from General Conway, with these words:—

"I have a piece of good news to tell you, which is the complete and entire defeat of the long-meditated attack on Gibraltar, which began on the 13th at 3 P.M., and before midnight all the famous floating batteries were either burnt or sunk by our red-hot balls. They lost, it is said, 1500 men, but none of distinction named. They saved some in their own boats, and General Elliot some in those he sent out."

Well, Madam, is not this General Elliot the old man of the mountain who destroyed enemies with his *feu* Gregeois? It was very obliging too in him to enliven my tame letter by such a gay conclusion—if one is to smile at the destruction of 1500 men! I did smile inwardly, for two persons came in as I was reading my letter; and, as I naturally said I hoped this event would facilitate peace, one of them said, "It is very uncertain what effect it will have on the King (of Spain): he has a sort of head that may persist the more for a thing being impossible." Now we must wait to see whether the combined fleets will be obstinate too and a tack Lord Howe, or let him victual Gibraltar.

2194. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 3, 1782.

I DID think it long since I had the honour of hearing from your Lordship; but, conscious how little I could repay you with any entertainment, I waited with patience. In fact, I believe summer-correspondences often turn on complaints of want of news. It is unlucky that that is generally the season of correspondence, as it is of separation. People assembled in a capital contrive to furnish matter, but then they have not occasion to write it. Summer, being the season of campaigns, ought to be more fertile: I am glad when that is not the case, for what is an account of a battle but a list of burials? Vultures and birds of prey might write with pleasure to their correspondents in the Alps of such events; but they ought to be melancholy topics to those who have no beaks or talons. At this moment if I was an epicure among the sharks, I should rejoice that General Elliot has just sent the carcases of fifteen hundred Spaniards down to market under Gibraltar;[1] but I am more pleased that he despatched boats, and saved some of those whom he had overset. What must a man of so much feeling have suffered at being forced to do his duty so well as he has done! I remember hearing such another humane being, that brave old admiral, Sir Charles Wager, say, that in his life he had never killed a fly.

This demolition of the Spanish armada is a great event: a very good one if it prevents a battle between Lord Howe and the combined fleets, as I should hope; and yet better if it produces peace, the only political crisis to which I look with eagerness. Were that happy moment arrived, there is ample matter to employ our great men, if we have any, in retrieving the affairs of this country, if they are to be retrieved. But though our sedentary politicians write abundance of letters in the newspapers, full of plans of public spirit, I doubt the nation is not sober enough to set about its own work in earnest. When none reform themselves, little good is to be expected. We see by the excess of highwaymen how far evils will go before any attempt is made to cure them. I am sure, from the

[1] On the 13th of September, when General Elliot repulsed the grand attack made on Gibraltar, and Captain Curtis, of the 'Brilliant,' who commanded the marine brigade upon the occasion, and his men, saved numbers of the Spaniards, at the hazard of their own lives.—WRIGHT.

magnitude of this inconvenience, that I am not talking merely like an old man. I have lived here about thirty years, and used to go everywhere round at all hours of the night without any precaution. I cannot now stir a mile from my own house after sunset without one or two servants with blunderbusses. I am not surprised your Lordship's pheasants were stolen: a woman was taken last Saturday night loaded with nine geese, and they say has impeached a gang of fourteen housebreakers—but these are undergraduates; when they should have taken their doctor's degrees, they would not have piddled in such little game. Those regius-professors the nabobs have taught men not to plunder for farthings.

I am very sensible of your Lordship's kindness to my nephew, Mr. Cholmondeley. He is a sensible, well-behaved young man, and, I trust, would not have abused your goodness. Mr. Mason writes to me, that he shall be at York at the end of this month. I was to have gone to Nuneham; but the house is so little advanced that it is a question whether they can receive me. Mason, I doubt, has been idle there. I am sure, if he found no Muses there, he could pick up none at Oxford, where there is not so much as a bedmaker that ever lived in a Muse's family. Tonton begs his duty to all the lambs, and trusts that Lady Strafford will not reject his homage.

2195. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 12, 1782.

An hour after I had sent my last to town for the Secretary's office, I received the account of the demolition of the Spanish floating batteries at Gibraltar. There was no occasion for sending a postscript after my letter, as I was sure you must learn that great success before my relation could reach you, especially as our intelligence came from the Continent. We have heard nothing but confirmations of that shining advantage, and assertions that the combined fleets mean to dispute the wall with Lord Howe. He has been detained by adverse winds; but we depend on Elliot's being as firm as his rocks (which are all that are left of Gibraltar), to maintain them till he is relieved, or has nothing but his rocks left to eat. The winds, the only powers that have made a figure in this war, have been playing the devil: we have lost two men-of-war; and the Jamaica fleet, that were dispersed by a storm, are not all arrived.

The enemies' have probably not fared better; for the winds, like the armed neutrality, mean no good to anybody.

This nothing is all I have to say; so, must tarry till something happens. I am sorry our correspondence makes us resemble vultures that live upon carcases, and banquet when there is a notable destruction of the human species. Oh! I had rather it starved!

15*th.*

Our Generals and Admirals are very inattentive people! They seem to forget that our correspondence depends on them. Elliot and Lord Howe have not sent me a paragraph for you this fortnight. I have not a dish for your table, brother Vulture! but a dozen Jamaica ships that have been cast away; and you are too much the representative of the royal eagle to be content with such vulgar food. A public minister cannot descend to feast on merchantmen. Well! if it is possible, you shall have an arm of the Comte d'Artois; or a leg of the Duke of Bourbon; or, which you would like better, on Mediterranean accounts, the heart of the Duc de Crillon! *Apropos*, I hear Sir William Draper persists in bringing General Murray to a Court-Martial; of which he probably will make nothing.

16*th.*

I have just received yours of September 28th, when you had not heard of the destruction of the floating batteries; though it had reached us on the 29th, and even me, who live ten miles out of the world, on the 30th. I was told yesterday, that in London the siege is believed to be raised. I hope so, and that there will be no massacres there; though it is thought that the combined fleets will fight Lord Howe—it is not my opinion; but what signifies making conjectures on what is passed by this time one way or the other? I shall no longer wait for the event, but send this to town to-morrow, meagre as it is.

2196. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 23, 1782.

Mr. Mason (who, by the by, is grown too plump for a poet and patriot, on whom the Constitutional as well as the *whole Castalian State* depends) has been here and brought me your Lordship's most kind invitation. I am afraid, my dear Lord, I dare not accept it so late in the season, and in such wet weather. The spirit is willing,

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

but the bones, I must not say the flesh, are weak. I am going to settle in town, not daring to stay even here in my own house, for fear of the damps bringing on the gout. I should not be able to resist walking out at Nuneham, or going into your new rooms, and the consequence would be encumbering you with an invalid for two months—so that I have still passions to conquer at sixty-five; and though I might not have resolution enough to subdue them on my own account, I can for your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's sakes. If I have a next summer, I shall hope to enjoy all your improvements within doors and without.

Mrs. Clivden, I flatter myself, is really recovered, having had no relapse since I mentioned her last. She even partakes of the diversions of the Carnival, which at Twickenham commences at Michaelmas, and lasts as long as there are four persons to make a pool. I am to go to her this evening to what she calls *only two Tables*. I have preached against hot rooms, but the Devil, who can conceal himself in a black ace as well as in an apple or a guinea, has been too mighty for me, and so, like other divines, when I cannot root out vice, I join in it.

Lady Cecilia [Johnstone] I have not seen this age. The highwaymen have cut off all communication between the nearest villages. It is as dangerous to go to Petersham as into Gibraltar. I comfort myself with the Gothicity of the times. Is not it delightful not to dare stir out of one's own castle but armed for battle? However, I am so scrupulous an adherent to good old customs, that I intend to be knighted and shall appoint Mr. Raftor[1] my Esquire, who is as great a coward as Sancho Panza, and has more humour. As it is right too, according to Cervantes, to mistake the objects of one's fury, I know whom I intend to attack as a highwayman, whom as a footpad, housebreaker, or assassin; and should I repeat the same ideas fifty times, I can justify myself by the same authority, and shall not want subjects.

Still, as even in this ferocious age I do not abandon all literary pursuits, I presume to send your Lordship a composition of my own, in that ingenious way that was last in vogue before martial glory quite expelled the Muses. I mean *a charade*. The word is a French name—*la voici*. The first part is thine, the second part belongs only to the most fashionable people, and the whole belongs only to me.

Your Lordship's most devoted,

HOR. WALPOLE.

[1] Mrs. Clive's brother.—CUNNINGHAM.

P.S. If your Lordship, nor Lady Harcourt, nor Miss Fauquier, nor Mr. Whithead can guess the charade, as I conclude, I will lay a wager Druid can.

2197. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 23, 1782.

Since I wrote last, I have received yours of October 5th, when you did not not know the demolition of the Spanish floating batteries; which surprises me, as it happened on the 13th of September, and I had learnt it on the 30th, though certainly I take no trouble to get intelligence, but am here quite ignorant of all that passes. By the common newspapers I see that the raising of the Siege is still believed, and that no account is received yet of Lord Howe, for which the public is as impatient as it is at present for anything; which is, because it is the chief object of the moment. The public does not fatigue its memory, or penetration, or anxiety, with aught beyond what is exactly before its eyes. I, in deference to the mode, and weary of having seen so much pass before mine for above sixty years together, have still greater indifference, as becomes me; and, since the nation cares so little about its own affairs, I do not think that a veteran half-superannuated has anything to do with them, and accordingly the echo suffices for me.

I smiled at my nephew the Earl's giving you so good an account of my health. It is a true one; but he must have shot his knowledge of it flying; for he only saw me as our chaises passed each other, as he was going to take leave of his mother at Hampton Court: but do not mention this. When people come to me, they are welcome; when they stay away, they are welcome too: I make myself very easy about most things. When I was young, I had some unpleasant uncles: now I am old, I have not much joy in my nephews. Very possibly I am not a pleasant uncle to them, but at least I do not interfere with their pleasing themselves; and so, when we do meet, we are upon very good terms. I aim at nothing but perfect tranquillity; and am so fortunate, that, if nothing disturbs me, my own temper never does. I carefully avoid everything that can create any disquiet to me. Old folks are easily forgotten, if they will but have the sense not to put the world in mind of them. This is a favourite maxim of mine; I practise it very carefully, and I assure you it answers to my sovereign contentment. I find it one

of the comforts of old age, that, if one has hoarded experience, one may live upon it very agreeably in one's latter time. One can execute one's maxims and good resolutions. In youth, our passions interpose and counteract them; but what hinders an old man from acting rationally, if he pleases? In truth, I think myself very happy: I have gout enough to serve as an excuse for anything I don't like to do, and I have health enough to allow me to do all I desire to do. I am not so infirm as to be a prisoner; I am grown indolent enough to think idleness palatable, and yet can and like to amuse myself. I perceive a gradual decay of my faculties; which perception, since it is well-founded, is a felicity, as ignorance of it might betray me into exposing myself; and I reflect with satisfaction, that, if my present ease should leave me, it cannot be for long.

I could have nothing else to say, when I have talked about myself for a whole page; but if to a friend of above forty years' standing a portrait of my wrinkles would be an acceptable present, why should not the picture of my mind be so? I think such a drawing one of the few things desirable: I cannot interest myself about the young world. The small number of my remaining old friends, and the memory of the past, are my most delicious enjoyments. However, as your life is not chequered with so many solitary hours as mine, you may not have a taste for such reflections; and therefore, when I have the least article of news to send you, I will not forget that I am your gazetteer, and not your philosopher.

2198. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Berkeley Square, Oct. 29, 1782.

I MUST trouble your Lordship with one word more, to say how infinitely obliged I am by your goodness, and how ashamed at your putting yourself to any inconvenience on my account. I could not pardon myself were I not sure that I should be a greater incumbrance to you. I should either be confined, or running away for fear of being so, and I know there is nothing so troublesome as tormenting others with whims about one's health.

I had heard with concern the reports that Mrs. Mac. gave your Lordship, and almost wish I could shut my ears on that chapter.

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

That ugly monkey, Lord Gr., was one of the most impertinent. We have had a sprig from the same bough lately in my neighbourhood, which I expect to see in the papers, though I believe a mere accident; but *Mrs. Coaxer* (you will probably think I mean *Mrs. Vixen*) was in such a *consternation* that she published it wherever she went, though it was nothing but the chance firing of a pistol.

I believe I did not do complete justice to my own charade. After I had sealed my letter, I recollected that I had omitted these words, "and my whole, though *doubly thine*, belongs," &c. I think it very important to set this right, as whatever relates to Tonton is the law and the prophets to me. I can prove it is not from self-vanity, for with equal scrupulousness I must reject your Lordship's compliment on my courage. I assure you I am no hero, but

A puny insect, shivering at a breeze.

I shall delight in Mason's altar-piece. Is the Levite who passed by at all like my Lord of York?

Adieu! My best Lord, forgive me, and be assured how very grateful I am for all your goodness to

Your most devoted,
H. Walpole.

2199. TO THE EARL OF HERTFORD.[1]

My dear Lord, *Oct.* 30, 1782.

I return you Lord Beauchamp's[2] pamphlet, and since you ordered me and I promised to tell you my sincere opinion of it, I will, though I had rather not, as I do not love to take upon me to give advice.

It is certainly very well written for Lord Beauchamp's purpose and situation in Ireland, but I confess I think the less it is seen by any one but those to whom it is addressed the better. There does not seem to me to be an argument in it in favour of the freedom and independence of *Ireland*, that is not equally applicable to *America*. Those principles are eternal and unalterable; and will it not be asked, how they are true with regard to Ireland and were not so towards America? Will it not be asked whether Ireland has not

[1] Now first published from a copy in Walpole's own handwriting.—Cunningham.

[2] Francis Seymour Conway, Viscount Beauchamp, afterwards, 1793, the second Marquis of Hertford. He died in 1822. This letter is to his father.—Cunningham.

asserted its own independence on infinitely less provocation than America. I think both countries are in the right; but by what distinction can the cause of the one and the other be discriminated, except, as I said, by Ireland's cause being weaker than that of America?

I certainly am glad Lord Beauchamp declares so strongly in favour of liberty against prerogative. He never can grow an advocate for the latter, or his own pamphlet will be a terrible witness against him.

There is one point in which I do not agree with him. He mumbles the case of the Revolution too tenderly. Modern Tories want to make it a unique case; that is not true, for whenever oppression has driven a nation to vindicate their rights the case has happened; and I trust it will not be a unique case in futurity more than it was in past times: that is which I doubt will happen, when any country shall be tyrannised; and though the servility of lawyers may have kept the precedent out of their books, thank God! it will not be forgotten. America has shown it was not.

I have no scruple of speaking thus freely to your Lordship; you know I have never varied in my principles, and I have lived to have the satisfaction of seeing those principles triumphant. Ireland having adopted them will become a great and flourishing country, and nothing but the revival of them here can restore this island to any part of the splendour which it had acquired by pursuing them. Lord Beauchamp will do himself and his family honour by adhering to those principles, now incorporated with the constitution of Ireland. England is disgraced, is sunk, by having embraced the contrary despicable system. Allow me to add, that of all politicians a politician author is most bound to adhere to the principles he has professed in print, for even posterity in that case can call him to account. I confess it was to give Lord Beauchamp this useful hint, that I have taken the liberty of saying so much, and I am sure I cannot show my regard for him so honourably, as by saying anything that may do credit to his character. Anybody can flatter—nobody should—a friend, never.

I am, &c.

2200. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 3, 1782.

Our mutual silence, Madam, has had pretty nearly the same cause, want of matter; for though my nominal wife, Lady Browne, has not left me like your Lord, I have led almost as uneventful a life as your Ladyship in your lonely woods, except that I have been for two days in town, and seen Mrs. Siddons.[1] She pleased me beyond my expectation, but not up to the admiration of the *ton*, two or three of whom were in the same box with me; particularly Mr. Boothby, who, as if to disclaim the stoic apathy of Mr. Meadows in 'Cecilia,' was all bravissimo. Mr. Crawfurd, too, asked me if I did not think her the best actress I ever saw? I said, "By no means; we old folks were apt to be prejudiced in favour of our first impressions." She is a good figure, handsome enough, though neither nose nor chin according to the Greek standard, beyond which both advance a good deal. Her hair is either red, or she has no objection to its being thought so, and had used red powder. Her voice is clear and good; but I thought she did not vary its modulations enough, nor ever approach enough to the familiar—but this may come when more habituated to the awe of the audience of the capital. Her action is proper, but with little variety; when without motion, her arms are not genteel. Thus you see, Madam, all my objections are very trifling; but what I really wanted, but did not find, was originality, which announces genius, and without both which I am never intrinsically pleased. All Mrs. Siddons did, good sense or good instruction might give. I dare to say, that were I one-and-twenty, I should have thought her marvellous; but alas; I remember Mrs. Porter and the Dumesnil—and remember every accent of the former in the very same part. Yet this is not entirely prejudice: don't I equally recollect the whole progress of Lord Chatham and Charles Townshend, and does it hinder my thinking Mr. Fox a prodigy?—Pray don't send him this paragraph too.

I am not laying a courtly trap, nor at sixty-five projecting, like the old Duke of Newcastle, to be in favour in the next reign. My real

[1] He saw her as Isabella in Southerne's tragedy of 'The Fatal Marriage, or the Innocent Adultery,' one of her great parts. Walpole was very young when he saw Mrs. Porter in the same part.—Cunningham.

meditations are on objects much more proper to my age. A letter I have just received from Lord Buchan informs me of, probably, much more splendid courts than the little tottering ruined palace in St. James's-street. Somebody at Bath (whose name I cannot read!) has made a telescope that magnifies a celestial object 6450 times, by which he finds that the new planet (which I did not see in town like Mrs. Siddons) is 160 times bigger than our little foot-ball; and, as the inventor expects to improve his instrument much farther, I suppose the new planet will improve in proportion. Perhaps I do not talk like an optician or an astronomer; but think, Madam, what exquisite glasses the new planetarians must have, before they can have any idea of our existing at all! Well, but as those 160 times bigger folks may have remained in as profound ignorance as Sir Joseph Banks' friends or Captain Cook's, how clever is it in *us* invisible pismires to have invented telescopes and calculated *their* size! I have often asked myself whither the myriads that are continually swept from our earth are to be transported? Now, as human pride concludes that the universal system was made for little us, here is a receptacle large enough—at least, that planet may know of others within reach, and not above some millions of millions of miles off. Now stoop, Madam, as many millions of miles as all these distances make, and let us talk of Gibraltar. Oh! what an atom! how can one figure it little enough, compared with what we have been talking of? Common sense is lost in the immensity: I am forced to look at my window, and persuade myself that Richmond-hill is a large object, before I can dismount from the stirrups of the telescope, and talk the usual language of the world.

I am glad to hear so good an account of Hatfield from our Lord. I have been invited thither; but I have done with terrestrial journeys. I have not philosophy enough to stand stranger servants staring at my broken fingers at dinner. I hide myself like spaniels that creep into a hedge to die; yet, having preserved my eyes and all my teeth, among which is a colt's, not yet decayed, I treated it and my eyes, not only with Mrs. Siddons but a harlequin farce. But there again my ancient prejudices operated: how unlike the pantomimes of Rich, which were full of wit, and coherent, and carried on a story! What I now saw was Robinson Crusoe: how Aristotle and Bossu, had they ever written on pantomimes, would swear! It was a heap of contradictions and violations of the costume. *Friday* is turned into Harlequin, and falls down at an

old man's feet that I took for Pantaloon, but they told me it was *Friday's* father. I said, "Then it must be *Thursday*," yet still it seemed to be Pantaloon. I see I understand nothing from astronomy to a harlequin—farce!

Your new visitor, I hope, Madam, has carried you to Drayton. It is a most venerable heap of ugliness, with many curious bits. There is a modern colonnade erected by Sir John Germaine,[1] the pillars of which, according to his usual ignorance, were at first, as Lady Suffolk told me, set up with their capitals downwards, supposing them pedestals.

I condole your loss of an old servant; I know no more of Gibraltar than you have seen in the papers. My Russians did come to breakfast, but understood Strawberry so little, that I thought it never before was so much the nurse—

of Goths, of Alans, and of Huns.

I am very uncertain when I shall settle in London, but think I must in a fortnight, when Mr. Duane will. He replaces Mr. Morrice for Cav. Mozzi. Mr. Bull, whom I saw in town, tells me poor Morrice is not at all better and thinks of Naples. I direct to Ampthill.

P.S. Lord Buchan, who tells me a vast deal about *our* antiquarian society at Edinburgh, and generally asks me many questions about past ages, has sent me two franks, that my knowledge may cost him no more than it is worth. Does your Ladyship know that Lord Monboddo has twice proposed to Mrs. Garrick? She refused him; I don't know whether because he says in his book that men were born with tails, or because they have lost them.

The following is an extract (I think you will like it) from a letter of Lord Mansfield to Monsieur Limon, who, Gerbier being ill, pleaded and carried the cause of Miss Hamilton against Parson Beresford, and sent his *plaidoyer* to his Lordship. "*Vous avez pris, Monsieur, le rôle destiné à Monsieur Gerbier, et vous l'avez remplacé. On ne s'est point apperçû de l'absence d'Atlas, quand le fardeau a été soutenu par Hercule.*"

The French, I conclude, Lord Stormont's; and the thought too perhaps—it is *pensé à la Françoise.*

I have seen the *plaidoyer;* it begins with setting forth that

[1] See vol. i. p. 95.—Cunningham.

Mr. Hamilton, the father of Miss, is in the line of succession to the crown of Scotland; and in three lines more I found that this Scottish princess lived at Pinner—a village vulgar enough for so highborn a heroine!

2201. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 4, 1782.

THE great news of the relief of Gibraltar by Lord Howe arrived this day se'nnight, and of the dispersion of the combined fleets by a storm, in which they lost two or three ships, and we none. This is a fine reproof to his Spanish Majesty's obstinacy. What pitiful beings are monarchs, when they knock their heads against winds and seas—yet even then, alas, they knock other heads too! There is something sublime in this little island, beset with foes, calmly despatching its own safeguard to maintain such a distant possession. I do not desire a codicil with a victory, which must be dearly bought: there would be dignity enough in returning, after having performed the intended service. For these two days, indeed, there has been the report of a battle much in our favour, though with the loss of six ships; but I hear it is not credited in London.

You are going to lose your neighbour, Lord Mountstuart: he is no farther off than Turin. They talk of some fracas of gallantry; but whether that was the cause, or politics, I am totally ignorant.[1] I know nothing but what the newspapers tell me, or stragglers from town. Lord Northington is the successor. I am little acquainted with him; but he is a decent, good sort of man.[2]

The Parliament will meet in three weeks; which must have some novelty, when the Administration is a new one. I wish it may be as new by being pacific, and not talk of *one campaign more.* I do not forget how often I have ended my letters with wishes for peace —almost as frequently as Lord Chesterfield talks of *the Graces:* however, peace must come sooner or later, which the Graces never did to his Cub.

[1] Lord Mountstuart had just succeeded to his rich reversionary office of one of the Auditors of the Imprests, and his attendance, in England at least, was necessary.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Robert, second Earl of Northington. The appointment alluded to did not take place. His Lordship died unmarried in 1786, when the title expired.—WALPOLE.

2202. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 5, 1782.

I HAD begun a letter in answer to another person, which I have broken off on receiving yours, dear Sir. I am exceedingly concerned at the bad account you give of yourself; and yet, on weighing it, I flatter myself that you are not only out of all danger, but have had a fortunate crisis, which I hope will prolong your life. A boil surmounted is a present from nature to us, who are not boys: and though you speak as weary of life from sufferings, and yet with proper resignation and philosophy, it does not frighten me, as I know that any humour and gathering, even in the gum, is strangely dispiriting. I do not write merely from sympathising friendship, but to beg that if your boil is not closed or healing, you will let me know; for the bark is essential, yet very difficult to have genuine. My apothecary here, I believe, has some very good, and I will send you some directly.

I will thank you, but not trouble you with an account of myself. I had no fit of the gout, nor any new complaint; but it is with the utmost difficulty I keep the humour from laming me entirely, especially in my hands, which are a mine of chalk-stones; but, as they discharge themselves, I flatter myself they prevent heavier attacks.

I do take in the 'European Magazine,' and think it in general one of the best. I forgot what was said of me: sometimes I am corrected, sometimes flattered, and care for neither. I have not seen the answer to Mr. Warton, but will send for it.

I shall not be sorry on my own account if Dr. Lort quits Lambeth, and comes to Saville-row, which is in my neighbourhood; but I did not think a wife was the stall where he would set up his staff.

You have given me the only reason why I cannot be quite sorry that you do not print what you had prepared for the press. No kind intention towards me from you surprises me—but then I want no new proofs. My wish, for whatever shall be the remainder of my life, is to be quiet and forgotten. Were my course to recommence, and one could think in youth as one does at sixty-five, I have

[1] Walpole's last letter to Cole. Cole died 16th Dec., 1782.—CUNNINGHAM.

no notion I should have courage to appear as an author. Do you know, too, that I look on fame now as the idlest of all visions? but this theme would lead me too far.

I collect a new comfort from your letter. The *writing* is much better than in most of your latest letters. If your pain were not ceased, you could not have formed your letters so distinctly. I will not say more, lest I should draw you into greater fatigue; let me have but a single line in answer.

Yours most cordially.

2203. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Nov. 5, 1782.

I BEG your Ladyship's pardon, but I cannot refrain from sending you a codicil to my last. I have taken to astronomy, now the scale is enlarged enough to satisfy my taste, who love gigantic ideas—do not be afraid; I am not going to write a second part to the 'Castle of Otranto,' nor another account of the Patagonians who inhabit the new Brobdignag planet; though I do not believe that a world 160 times bigger than ours is inhabited by pigmies—they would do very well for our page, the moon.

I have been reading Lord Buchan's letter again. He tells me that Mr. What-d'ye-call-him, at Bath, says that the new planet's orbit is eighty of our years. Now, if their days are in proportion to their year, as our days are to our year, a day in the new planet must contain 1920 hours; and yet, I dare to say, some of the inhabitants complain of the shortness of the days. I may err in my calculations, for I am a woful arithmetician, and never could learn my multiplication table; but no matter, one large sum is as good as another. How one should smile to hear the Duchess of Devonshire of the new planet cry, "Lord! you would not go to dinner yet, sure! it is but fifteen hundred o'clock!" or some Miss,—"Ah! that superannuated old fright, I'll lay a wager she's a year old." But stay; here I don't go by my own rule of proportion, I ought to suppose their lives adequate to their size. Well, any way, one might build very entertaining hypotheses on this new discovery.

The planet's distance from the sun is 1,710,000,000 of miles—I revere a telescope's eyes that can see so far! What pity that no Newton should have thought of improving instruments for hearing too! If a glass can penetrate 1,710,000,000 of miles

beyond the sun, how easy to form a trumpet like Sir Joshua Reynolds's,[1] by which one might overhear what is said in Mercury and Venus, that are within a stone's throw of us! Well, such things will be discovered—but alas! we live in such an early age of the world, that nothing is brought to any perfection! I don't doubt but there will be invented spying-glasses for seeing the thoughts—and then a new kind of stucco for concealing them; but I return to my new favourite, astronomy. Do but think, Madam, how fortunate it is for us that discoveries are not reciprocal. If our superiors of the great planets were to dabble in such minute researches as we make by microscopes, how with their infinitely greater facilities, they might destroy us for a morning's amusement! They might impale our little globe on a pin's point, as we do a flea, and take the current of the Ganges or Oroonoko for the circulation of our blood—for with all due respect for philosophy of all sorts, I humbly apprehend that when people wade beyond their sphere, they make egregious blunders — at least we do, who are not accustomed to them. I am so vulgar, that when I hear of 17,000,000 of miles, I fancy astronomers compute by livres like the French, and not by pounds sterling, I mean, not by miles sterling. Nay, as it is but two days that I have grown wise, I have another whim. I took it into my head last night that our antediluvian ancestors, who are said to have lived many hundred years, were not inhabitants of this earth but of the new planet, whence might come the account, which we believe came from heaven. Whatever came from the skies, where the new planet lives, would, in the apprehension of men at that time, be deemed to come from heaven. Now, if a patriarch lived ten of their years, which may be the term of their existence, and which according to our computation make 800 of our years, he was pretty nearly of the age of Methusalem; for what signifies a fraction of an hundred years or so?—Yet I offer this only as a conjecture; nor will I weary your Ladyship with more, though I am not a little vain of my new speculations.

Apropos to millions, have you heard, Madam, of the Prince de Guemené's breaking for 28,000,000 of livres? Would not one think it was a debt contracted by the two Foleys?[2] I know of

[1] Sir Joshua was very deaf:—

When they talk'd of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.—*Goldsmith, Retaliation.*
—Cunningham.

[2] See vol. vi., p. 364.—Cunningham.

another Prince de Guemené, who lived, I think, early in the reign of Louis Quatorze, and had a great deal of wit. His wife was a *savante*. One day, he met coming out of her closet an old Jew (not such as the present Prince and the Foleys deal with, but), quite in rags, and half stark. The Prince asked who he was? The Princess replied scornfully, "*mais il me montre l'hebreu.*"—"*Eh bien,*" said the Prince, "*et bien-tôt il vous montrera son cul.*"—I hope this story, if you did not know it, will make amends for the rest of my rhapsody.

2204. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 10, 1782.

I AM very happy that my illustrations of the new planet, which you call anonymous, amused your Ladyship and Lady Anne for a moment in our Lord's absence; but I do not intend to overload you with them; I assure you the inventor has christened it *the Georgian* —whether in imitation of the constellation named *Charles's Wain*, or to console his Majesty with new dominions in lieu of those he has lost, I do not know. I was happy to be *planet-struck*, as you so properly call it; for having totally abandoned politics and authorship, I catch at any whim that will occupy me for a day or two and stop a gap in my correspondences. Lord Ossory asks very reasonably why I correspond with Lord Buchan—because I cannot help it now and then: I am his Tom Hearne, and he *will* extract from me whatever in the course of my antiquarian dips I have picked up about Scottish kings and queens, for whom in truth I never cared a straw. I have tried everything but being rude to break off the intercourse; and sometimes go as near the line as I can by smiling. My last answer was of that kind: I humbly pointed out an error of the press in the first number of the 'Memoirs' of their society which he sent me. On the reverse of a medal of their vestal martyr, Queen Mary, they have printed *Satyr* for *Saltyr*—and I terrified myself lest it should be construed into an intended aspersion!

My last diversion has been of a different nature from star-gazing. Mrs. Hobart, last Friday, invited me to her play, at Ham Common. I went, because Mr. Conway and Lady Aylesbury, and Mrs. Damer, were for that purpose at Lady Cecilia Johnstone's, and I had not seen them for an age. I was extremely pleased, especially with the

after-piece. The play was 'All in the Wrong,'[1] and a vile thing it is: there are three couple, all equally jealous, with no discrimination of character. It is like two looking-glasses that reflect each other without end. Mrs. Hobart played admirably, and most genteelly, which was very refreshing, as one never sees anything like a woman of fashion on the stage. Her three daughters all did well. A Mr. Fury is cried up as a miracle: he was not so in my eyes. Col. Gardner, who is not liked, was, I thought, little inferior, yet but middling; but in the 'Guardian,'[2] all was perfect. The eldest Miss Hobart, so lovely and so modest, was not acting, she was the thing itself. There was an Irish Mr. Arabin, from Sir William East's theatre, incomparable in the uncle. His own brogue added exceedingly, and a Colonel Tims, being a very well-looking man, and playing most justly, made the story very probable.

There was a great deal of good company collected from the environs, and even from London, but so armed with blunderbusses that when the servants were drawn up after the play, you would have thought it had been a midnight review of conspirators on a heath. There were Lord and Lady North and their family, the Seftons, Lucans, Duncannons, Lady Maries Coke and Lowther, Lords Graham and Palmerston, Lady Bridget Tollemache and her sister, the T. Pitts, and the two Storers. There, too, I saw Mrs. Johnston, the Portugu-Englishwoman, that was called such a beauty: she is a fine figure, but not handsome, though too good for such a brutal swine.

You are very kind about my nieces, Madam; but I do not believe there was the least intention of hurt to them. The gentlemen were cleaning their pistols at the window of the Toy,[3] and discharged them as the girls were going by. Mrs. Keppel took an alarm; and much less falling on such a soil as Hampton Court will bring forth lies an hundred fold. Lady Chewton looked remarkably well at her return from Weymouth; I know nothing of her since.

Berkeley Square, 12th.

I had begun this letter at Strawberry on Sunday night, just before I went to bed: my *reveil* was shocking; an express brought

[1] A comedy by Arthur Murphy.—CUNNINGHAM.
[2] A comedy in two acts by David Garrick.—CUNNINGHAM.
[3] A tavern, so called, at Hampton Court.—CUNNINGHAM.

me news of the death of Lady Hertford![1] I truly loved her, she had been invariably kind to me for forty years. She had been seized on the preceding Sunday with a violent cough and spitting of blood, and left Ditton on the Tuesday for fear of being confined in that damp spot, which has been her death. Lady Aylesbury saw her on Friday morning and thought her very ill, and I had determined to come to her yesterday morning, but heard the cruel event before I could set out; it was an inflammation in her bowels, but as on Friday she had had no physician, I could not conceive her in danger. The moment I arrived I sent to know if Lord Hertford would see me; he said he would in the evening. I went, but met his son Henry in the hall, who said his father could not bear the interview. Alas! this was a relief to me: I had amassed resolution to go, as it was right I should, but I behaved so wretchedly at the sight of the son, that it was well I did not see the father! His loss is beyond measure. She was not only the most affectionate wife, but the most useful one, and almost the only person I ever saw that never neglected or put off, or forgot anything that was to be done. She was always proper, either in the highest life or in the most domestic. Her good humour made both sit easy; to herself only she gave disquiet by a temper so excessively affectionate. In short, I was witness to so many virtues in her, that after my Lord and her children, I believe nobody regrets her so sincerely as I do. Her house was one of my few remaining habitudes; but those drawbacks on long life make its conclusion less unwelcome!

[1] The following letter is now first published:—

London, Nov. 10, 1782.

TO THE HONOURABLE HORATIO WALPOLE.

DEAR HORRY,—With a dagger in my heart, which nothing in this world can extract, I am determined to exert all my feeble power to tell you, who loved my dearest and beloved Lady Hertford, that I am upon the point of losing her—the best woman, the best friend, and best wife that ever existed.

Do not make me any answer and pity me; I am not able to bear even the condolence of a friend. Yours, dear Horry,

HERTFORD.

—CUNNINGHAM.

2205. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 10, 1782.

I DO not know whether you are like those auctioneers who put up a lot at an extravagant rate, and then, if it sells but for what it is worth, cry, "It is given away." I, if my footman goes on a message and executes it, am content; I don't desire he should have threshed another footman and spoiled his own livery. Lord Howe has relieved and victualled Gibraltar, and has been attacked by the combined fleets, who did not admire his reception of them; made him a bow and retired; and he is coming home without the loss of a wherry. I like this better than if he had sent home the main-mast of the Admiral's ship to be hung up in Westminster Hall with the standards of Blenheim, and had lost two or three first-rates. The Romans, who had some sense—sometimes—that is, when they thought as I do, loved to be obeyed *au pied de la lettre*. I don't say but Lord Howe had a plenary indulgence for demolishing both squadrons, if he could; but is not there more grave dignity in marching in face of a very superior navy, maintaining a fortress on their own coast, engaging that navy, obliging it to retire, and walking home himself very deliberately? Add, the vexation of that obstinate mule the King of Spain, and the ridiculous flippancies of the Bourbon Princes, and there appears to me ten times more majesty in such sedate triumph than in a naval victory. Superior armies and fleets have been beaten by inconsiderable numbers; but, when a multitude are baffled by a handful after a mere skirmish, Glory has no true taste if she does not range herself on our side.

As I am of an age to have made a league with all the sober virtues, I would behave temperately on this occasion, and still condescend to offer peace.

Western Europe has, upon the whole, made but a foolish figure of late, either in policy or arms. *We* have flung away men, money, and thirteen provinces. *France* has been spiteful, to gain nothing but the honour of mischief. Spain has been bombastly unsuccessful, and Holland has betrayed imbecility in every light. Dr. Franklin may laugh at *us;* but surely he cannot reverence his allies.

Berkeley Square, 12*th.*

I am come to town on a very melancholy occasion. Lady Hertford

died the night before last of an inflammation in her bowels, after an illness of only eight days.[1] Her loss to my Lord is irreparable, a considerable one to society, and to me a very sensible one. She was not only an incomparable wife, but conducted all the affairs of so numerous a family herself; in short, she had every domestic virtue and a thousand good qualities. To me she had at all times been kind and obliging. I had lived a great deal with her, and it was one of the few houses on which I reckoned for my remaining time. It will make a great chasm, as I do not either seek or encourage new acquaintance—and almost all the old are gone! It is difficult to stop, when common-place reflections crowd on one's thoughts and mix with one's sensations; but it would not be just to moralise to *you*, because *I* feel. You knew not poor Lady Hertford; and therefore every one that drops would be as fit a subject to preach upon.

2206. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[2]

Berkeley Square, Nov. 12, 1782.

I AM certainly little worthy of the great honour you do me, my best Lord, but I should be utterly unworthy of it were I to give myself airs of intelligence, or presume to give you advice when I am totally in the dark. I have not the least idea of what is to be the subject of the opening. My ignorance of what is passing is extreme, for I do not even ask a question. By the violence with which the old Ministers or their dependents rave against the independence of America, Lord Shelburne, perhaps, expects great opposition. If he does, he cannot have concluded a treaty with them, and unless they oppose him, who is to be apprehended in the House of Lords? The promotion of Jenkinson I have only seen in the newspapers, or from those who saw it there.

Should I, which is not likely, hear what the specific business is, I will undoubtedly acquaint your Lordship. At this moment, I own my head, which has entirely forsworn politics, is not very capable of attending to them. I have lost, and very suddenly, poor Lady Hertford, whom I sincerely loved and valued, and who has in all

[1] Lady Arabella Fitzroy, youngest daughter of Charles, second Duke of Grafton, and wife of [1741] Francis Seymour Conway, first Earl of Hertford of that line, by whom she had seven sons and six daughters, who all lived to be men and women. She was lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte.—WALPOLE.

[2] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.





FRANCIS SEYMOUR CONWAY,

Earl of Hertford &c &c

Walpole's Cousin & Correspondent

FROM THE ORIGINAL FORMERLY AT STRAWBERRY HILL

times treated me most kindly for forty years. Her loss to her husband and family is irreparable. I feel for them, but I confess I feel the loss to myself too, heavily. I knew all her great and good qualities, and time and accidents have reduced my friends to so very small a number, that I neither seek, nor am likely to find, a succedaneum of equal merit.

I beg pardon for talking of my own griefs, when I ought only to reply to your Lordship. Why should you not come for a day and judge for yourself? Nobody has authority to retain you. Surely your Lordship is independent and unhampered, if any man is! Should the business be to approve American independence, I think you would be sorry not to give your vote for it. Excuse my saying no more, for my heart is full, yet though of the dead. I can never forget how much I ought to be and am, &c.

2207. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 16, 1782.

Your Ladyship, as ever, is good to me both in inviting and in excusing me. Could I wait on you, the great misfortune of losing poor Lady Hertford should not detain me; for as Lord Hertford will be in Suffolk, I could be of no use to him; and to be at Ampthill would be much more agreeable than to be in London, where I have lost the house to which for forty years I went the oftenest—but to London I must go on Monday on different businesses. One is to meet Lord Orford's lawyers with Mr. Duane, whom I have obtained to replace Mr. Morrice as referee for the suit between my Lord and his mother's residuary legatee, who has been treated scandalously, and put off to this moment. I have another affair to settle with the children of Mr. Bentley, who is dead,[1] and for whom (the children) I have placed a very small sum in the funds, which I am now to transfer to them. I will say nothing of myself, though, without being confined, I cannot at present take a journey. I should be very glad to meet Lady Chewton, whom I have not seen a great while. I do hear she is very well, but grown extremely thin.

[1] Richard Bentley, the correspondent of Walpole, died in October, 1782, and was buried at Teddington, on the Thames, near to Twickenham.—Cunningham.

Lord Hertford, I am certain, will be extremely sensible of your Ladyship's attention. Any mark of regard for Lady Hertford's memory will be dear to him. Every word he utters is an encomium on her. Indeed, his grief is as rational as it is deep; it is an uninterrupted funeral sermon on her. Yet, though he is so devout, it was not tinged with any of the common-place litanies, with which pious people often colour their want of feeling. His concern is too sincere and too desponding to use any expressions that are not genuine. Lady Hertford was his wife, friend, clerk, and steward, and was as active as she was attached. Her affection and zeal attended to everything, and her good sense made everything easy to her; but I forget, and am indulging my own sensations, while I meant only to do justice to those of Lord Hertford.

I hope Lord Ossory adjusted the squabbles of his regiment to his satisfaction.

P.S. As I was going to seal this, I received your Ladyship's second kind note. I wish the character[1] could comfort Lord Hertford, but it is no momentary satisfaction that can close such a wound which every incident that reminds him of his loss will open. It is justice to him to tell you that the very morning Lady Hertford expired his first thought was to have this tribute paid to her. I found a note from him on my table in town, which I could scarce read, to beg it, and in an hour he wrote again. It is as just to her to say, that they were my immediate thoughts, and consequently the true; that I set them down, transcribed and carried them at seven that evening, and gave them to his son Henry, when my Lord was not able to see me himself—thus your Ladyship sees there could be no art, study, or preparation in them. Lady Lucan has just called and told me what I am very sorry for too, though in no proportion,—that Sir Joshua Reynolds has had a stroke of palsy. I finish, lest I should moralise.

2208. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 26, 1782.

You will be impatient to learn the event of this day, on which depended the horoscope of the present Administration. I shall not be sorry if you should hear from France, before you receive this,

[1] A Character of Lady Hertford, which Walpole wrote for publication in the newspapers. I have seen the 'note' from Lord Hertford, to which Walpole alludes in this letter.—Cunningham.

that an era of much more importance to mankind than the fate of a Minister had intervened. But, to waive riddles; on Saturday last, it was declared that the Parliament, which was to meet to-day, was put off to the fifth of next month; by which time the Ministers hoped to be able to declare whether the peace would be made or was desperate. Our ultimatum went some days ago to Paris: I don't know what it is; therefore I devoutly hope it will be accepted. I look to the scale in which lives are, and not to that of glory; and wish the reality may outweigh the smoke, as it ought to do.

You have seen, I suppose, in the newspapers, the articles preferred against General Murray by Sir William Draper, who has certainly attacked his weak side, his judgment. It threatened to be a most tedious trial: it is interrupted, at least for the present, by Draper's falling ill. Probably, I should not have known so much as this, had I not thought *you* would be curious. I have long determined not to concern myself with Courts-Martial, which I do not understand; and it is unjust for so ignorant a person to pronounce on men whose honour is at stake: were a lawyer to be tried, his character is of no consequence; at worst he could be made a Peer. Physicians, though they commit more deaths than soldiers, never are tried; and for Divines, it would be idle, for they expound their own laws as they please, and always in their own favour.

I began this letter, for this was-to-have-been important day, two days ago, but I am not able to finish it myself. I suppose I caught cold on my coming to town, for in three days I was seized with the gout, and have it now from the top of my left shoulder to the ends of my fingers—but enough of that. I have told you before of the savage state we are fallen into: it is now come to such perfection, that one can neither stir out of one's house safely, nor stay in it with safety. I was sitting here very quietly under my calamity on Saturday night, when, at half an hour after ten, I heard a loud knock at the door. I concluded that Mr. Conway or Lady Aylesbury had called after the Opera to see how I did; nobody came up; a louder knock. I rang to know who it was; but, before the servants could come to me, the three windows of this room and the next were broken about my ears by a volley of stones, and so were those of the hall and the library below, as a hint to me how glad I must be of my Lord Rodney's victory six or eight months ago. In short, he had dined at the 'London Tavern' with a committee of the Common Council; for the Mayor and Aldermen had refused to banquet him. Thence he had paraded through the whole town to his own house at this end, with a rabble

at his heels breaking windows for not being illuminated, for which no soul was prepared, as no soul thought on him; but thus our conquerors triumph! My servants went out and begged these Romans to give them time to light up candles, but to no purpose; and were near having their brains dashed out. I did not know that my windows were either French or Spaniards; but glaziers and tallow-chandlers always treat sashes as public enemies. As next day was Sunday, I expected to remain in a Temple of the Winds; but my glazier at least had the charity to repair the mischief that perhaps he had done.

Your sister-in-law, Mrs. Mann,[1] was robbed about ten days ago in New Park, between three and four in the afternoon; the prudent matron gave the highwayman a purse with very little money, but slipped her watch into the bag of the coach. The cavalier, not being content, insisted on more. The poor girl, terrified, gave him not only her own pinchbeck watch, but her grandmother's concealed gold one; for which, no doubt, she will undergo many a supernumerary lecture on economy and discretion, and the Christian duty of cheating highwaymen. Adieu! for I am weary, and can dictate no more: but, indeed, I have nothing more to say.

P.S. I expect to hear of Mr. Duane every day; but God knows whether I shall be able to do any business with him yet, for the gout is come into five places at once: poor Mozzi should have younger labourers in his vineyard than Mr. Morrice and me.

2209. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 27, 1782.

Alas! I am totally incapacitated for being your gazetteer: you see I cannot pen my newspaper myself, nor see people to tell me news, nor have I scarce voice enough to dictate if I knew any. In short, I have the gout in five places without reckoning sub-divisions of fingers: moreover, I have a higher fever than usual; so that if the gout does not kill me, perhaps one of his Hussars may. I had been in town but three days when I was seized, and have grown much worse ever since, yet not having had much pain, my patience is not exhausted.

[1] The widow of Mr. Galfridus Mann.—Walpole.

As I am no stock-jobber, I have not calculated my own belief about peace or war: I wait for my apothecary with more earnestness than for the decisive courier. All factions I suppose are as much at bay, though probably with far less indifference. I wish the world well, and therefore desire peace; but what have I to wish but not to suffer? I shall not send this away till to-morrow, that if I should have a tolerable night, which will be my first, I may tell you so.

26th.

I have had a quiet night and very little fever to-day, and hope my disorder has taken a favourable turn.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, Dec. 4, 1782.

Though your postscript gives me hopes that your gout is going off, yet I cannot help making my inquiries, in hopes that a speedy answer from you may tell me that it is entirely gone, though I fear this very severe weather is against you.

In my last I forgot to mention, that I some time ago received a very civil message for you from Mr. Gilpin,[1] intimating that if you would do him the honour to accept one of his drawings, and give it a place in your Collection, he would send you one. This I have already answered for you in as civil an affirmative, and therefore you have nothing to do but thank him for it when it does come. I fancy one of his Tours on the Wye is either published, or soon will be, for I received a book from him by way of specimen some time ago. The aquatinta plates are the best imitations of his style that can be. I am sure you will be pleased with them, and you would do well to send to Blamire, in the Strand, near Northumberland House, to secure a good impression.

Pray what authority had you to say that Mr. Pope's mother was Cooper's daughter? The Biog. Britannica and Ruffhead and Warburton's edition, which authority I followed in the print my servant etched from Richardson's drawing (see note to the 381st line of the Prologue to the Satires), call her the daughter of William Turner, Esq., of York, and in the parish of Worsbro, a village very near Lord Stafford, is the following register:—

1643. Edith, the daughter of Mr. William Turner, bapt. 18th June.[2]

Which Mr. Brooke, one of the heralds who is writing an account of Yorkshire families, says is the same person.

All this, it is true, is of little moment; but it is archæological, and does very well to make my letter of a more competent length, when I have nothing better to say, except that I am most sincerely yours,

W. Mason.

"What peace! so long as the whoredoms of my mother Jezebel and her witch-

[1] Several of Gilpin's drawings are in the Rectory-house at Aston, where he often visited.—Mitford.

[2] "I buried the famous General Meredyth's father last night, in my cathedral; he was ninety-six years old, so that Mrs. Pope may live seven years longer."—*Swift to Gay, 4th May,* 1732. This agrees with the register. In 1732, Mrs. Pope was in her 89th year. At her death, on the 7th June, 1733, she was ninety; not, as her son says on her monument, ninety-three.—Cunningham.

2210. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

My best Lord, *Berkeley Square, Nov.* 28, 1782.

You are so very kind that I must obey you, though I hold it very idle to trouble anybody with the details of my decay. I have indeed for a little while been extremely ill, and much worse with its fever than with the gout itself, though I have that in five places. Philip told before dinner that he saw I was better, for I had taken up a book, which I had not done for six days. Thus, my dear Lord, I have complied with your injunction, but I do not intend to make a practice of it, for the gout is such a tiresome old story, that it is not fit anybody should be plagued with it but those who must endure it, never those who have so much sensibility as your Lordship.

I have just received a most kind and pleasing letter from Lady Maria, who is so charmed with the improvements at Nuneham, though it snowed all day, that she seems to think

> That Paradise was open'd in the Wild.—[*Pope.*]

I beg your Lordship to tell her that I will write to her as soon as I am able, but I cannot even dictate now for any time. I hear poor Lady Waldegrave is extremely ill, which is all I know, not having been able to see anybody till to-day. Adieu, my good Lord, and be assured that while I have breath,

I shall be, &c.

2211. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 29, 1782.

The hand [Kirgate's] tells your Ladyship that I cannot write my own: I have been extremely ill; in point of fever, I think, worse than I ever was; for though I have the gout in five places, I have had but little pain. I trust the disorder is turned; for I am so low to-day that the fever must be in a manner gone, and I have no new pain anywhere; therefore your Ladyship will be so

crafts are so many." Pray, when you are well enough to see Lady Craven (whom Lord Strafford calls your Sappho), ask her after her lawn-sleeved Phaon, my worthy diocesan.

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

good as not trouble yourself about my gout, which will cure itself in due time.

It was not pleasant, when I was so ill, to have all my windows broken for that vain fool Rodney, who came out of his way to extend his triumph.

I am very happy, Madam, with what you say of Lady Chewton. She is an extremely good young woman, of a very grave turn, and extreme sensibility; she very seldom is in high spirits, but always more affected by sorrow than joy. I had a note from her this morning, and expect to see her, and I hope Lord Chewton, to-morrow. I have heard that Lady Waldegrave is very ill, but that my Lord was returned from Bath much better.

I have been so entirely shut up for this week that I know nothing, and my voice is too weak to dictate much if I did. As I take a great many killings, more than a Hercules, I shall probably be well again in a few days, and able to write myself.

2212. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Monday evening, Dec. 2, 1782.

The day that I little expected to live to see, is arrived! Peace came this morning: thank God! That is the first thought: the effusion of human gore is stopped, nor are there to be more widows and orphans out of the common course of things.

What the terms are will be known before this goes away to-morrow: they may be public already; but here am I, lying upon a couch and not out of pain, waiting with patience for what I shall learn from the few charitable that I am able to admit. Proud conditions I, nor even you in your representative dignity, can expect. Should they be humiliating, *they* ought to answer who plunged us into a quadruple war, and managed it deplorably for seven years together!

As I have not breath to dictate much, I shall not waste myself on a single reflection: but in truth I am very low; and what are all the great and little affairs of the world to me, who am mouldering away, not imperceptibly!

Just now I received yours of the 16th of November, chiefly on the affairs of Gibraltar; you will find how details in that place, like your preceding occupation for Minorca, will be absorbed in subsequent events.

To Cavalier Mozzi I can say nothing at present. I have not seen Mr. Duane, nor am I at all capable of business yet. I am taken up and carried to bed by three servants: Chancellors and Judges are sometimes placed on their woolsacks in as lamentable a condition; but I was not bred to the law, nor habituated to earn money to the last dregs—and, when one is to have no fees, can it be expected that I should go to Court? Well! well! I will do the best I can when I am able. Good night till to-morrow!

Friday night, the 6th.

I was much too ill on Tuesday to finish this, and, besides that, recollected that whatever was to be heard you would learn from Paris sooner than from London. I began to write upon the first buzz of the courier being arrived; but all he brought was the Provisional treaty with America, which too is not to take place till the General Peace does. This, however, we are told to expect soon—and there I must leave peace and war, kingdoms and states, and trust to your nephew for saying anything else; for in truth I am not able. The scale of life and death has been vibrating; I believe it is turned to the former. I have had two very good nights, and the progress of the gout seems quite stopped; but I am exceedingly low and weak, and it will take me some time to recover: but I assure you, my dear Sir, you may be easy. I have now a good opinion of myself, and I have spoken so plainly that you may believe me.

Adieu! You shall hear again soon, unless I see your nephew, whom I will desire to give you a more particular account.

2213. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 7, 1782.

I HAVE been so extremely ill that I say a great deal when I tell you I think I am recovering. Whether I shall recover even to where I was before seems very doubtful to me. The attack, though the fit was very short, was so violent and I have so little strength, that it will require much time at least to re-establish me.

Thus much I could not help saying to your kind inquiry, but neither my head nor my breast will let me say much more.

I thank you for accepting Mr. Gilpin's very obliging offer, which I shall much value and beg you to thank him for.

What I said of Pope's mother was taken from Vertue's MSS., but I had made a mistake, which is corrected in the new edition of the

'Anecdotes.' Samuel Cooper's wife was sister of Pope's mother, and therefore Cooper was brother-in-law of Pope's father.[1]

I am not likely to see Sappho [Lady Craven] soon; in the mean time she has my free leave to indemnify herself with the high priest of Lemnos.

My poor head is not at all a receptacle for politics, and my voice as little fit to talk of them, especially when all is uncertainty and conjecture, nor is the busy world a scene for me, who have just made shift to linger on the threshold.

Adieu, my dear Sir! whenever I am able I will write again.—

It is true that I am tolerably recovered except in my right hand, which never will recover, for all joints are so encrusted with chalk-stones that I can scarce move any but my thumb; and though, as you perceive, I can still write by the help of the last, it is so slowly and with so much uneasiness that I commonly make Kirgate write for me.

When one is grown so old and so helpless, and foresee as I do that the next severe fit will probably carry me off, you will not wonder that I care very little for what is passing, and less for what is to happen when I am gone. Politics I have done with, and should were I in a more vigorous state. To me there is a new generation, and nothing has less decorum than an old man pretending to belong to another age. My notions were all embraced above forty years ago, and have never varied. They had little weight with anybody when I was younger. I should still less expect them to listen to an antediluvian. Why should I expect it? do such ancients as I deign to conform to new modes? I cannot think Mrs. Siddons[2] the greatest prodigy that ever appeared, nor go to see her act the same part every week and cry my eyes out every time.

[1] This is correct. I will add a discovery which I was the first to make:—Cooper's wife was Pope's godmother.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Lord Harcourt's judgment of Mrs. Siddons, on her first appearance, in the uncertain dawn of her fame, will not be uninteresting: "To say that Mrs. Siddons, in one word, is superior to Mrs. Pritchard in 'Lady Macbeth,' would be talking nonsense, because I don't think that it is possible; but, on the other hand, I will not say with those *impartial* judges, Mr. Whitehead and Miss Fauquier, that she does not play near as well. But there are others, too, and in the parts for Mrs. Siddons, that are of this opinion; that she has much more expression of countenance, and can assume parts with a spirit, cannot be denied; but that she wants the dignity, and, above all, the ever unequalled compass and melody of Mrs. Pritchard. I thought her wonderful, and very fine in the rest of that scene. She throws a degree of proud and filial tenderness into this speech, 'Had he not resembled,' &c., which is new, and of great

Were I five-and-twenty, I suppose I should weep myself blind, for she is a fine actress, and fashion would make me think a brilliant what now seems to me only a very good rose diamond.

Still it is not that I am not very willing to be amused, and do try to divert myself as well as I can, and intend to do so to the end of my lease. For example, I have lately seen an essay on 'Gardening' written by Mons. Girardin, Rousseau's grave-digger. There are some sensible ideas in it, but as the French write by the laws of fashion more than by those of common sense, his rules are far from being all practicable. As it is the *ton* too to talk Agriculture, his book concludes with it, as Bishop Berkeley's tar-water ended with the Trinity. Two passages are very delightful. Mons. Girardin being a rigid classic, will tolerate nothing but Grecian Temples and Domes. Spires, those most graceful and picturesque of all elevations, he proscribes as Gothic and barbarous, and thinks he has exploded them for ever by this Brobdignaggian puerility: "*Ils assassinent les nuages.*"

His receipt for making rocks in your garden is not less admirable: "Take a mountain, break it into pieces with a hammer, number the fragments and observe their antecedent positions: place them in their original order, cover the junctures with mould: plant ivy and grass and weeds, which will hide the fractures, and so you may have a cart-load of Snowdon or Penmenmaur in the middle of your bowling-green, and no soul will suspect that it did not grow there."

Like the Abbé de Lisle he is fond too of erecting cenotaphs to heroes and patriots, which with the French rage imitating whatever is the vogue of the hour would convert their inclosures into churchyards, and Vestris would have a statue as well as Turenne. But we have no right to laugh at France; Vestris was a greater idol here than at Paris; Garrick's funeral was ten times more attended than Lord Chatham's, and Mrs. Siddons has obliterated General Elliot:

I nunc et nugas tecum meditare canoras!

That is, you may play on your Celestinette, mend our gardens or the Constitution, and the first singer or dancer will efface all your

effect. Her 'Are you a man?' in the banquet scene, I thought inferior to Mrs. Pritchard's, and for the parts spoken at a great distance her voice wanted power. Her countenance, aided by a studious and judicious choice of head-dress, was a true picture of a mind diseased in the sleeping scene, and made one shudder; and the effect, as a

vigils in a moment, as much as if you had endowed an hospital—for this is the land where all things are forgotten!

I have been two days labouring through this letter, and yet my lame awkwardness has made me blot it so that it is scarce legible; but I can do no better. Adieu![1]

picture, was better in that than it had ever been with the taper, because it allows of variety in the actress, of washing her hands; but the sigh was not so horrid, nor was the voice so sleepy, nor yet quite so articulate as Mrs. Pritchard's." *MS. Letter.*—MITFORD.

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, Jan. 18, 1783.

I HAVE heard frequently from Mr. Stonehewer and Lord Harcourt that you had recovered from your late fit, and that a lameness in your hand was the only cause that I did not hear from you, and this (as I had literally nothing to say that could in any sort amuse you) prevented me from writing to make, as they call it, obliging inquiries. As to our reports, petitions, &c., you reckon not about them; neither indeed have you any occasion, for I take for granted they will all end in smoke. Nevertheless I do firmly believe, that if Lord North dares to give that general and decided opposition to parliamentary reformation which it is said he intends, a flame will arise out of our smoke which will be found hard to quench, till he has suffered for the evils he has brought on this wretched nation. As to his present strength, I think we are entirely obliged to the Rockingham Administration for that, who should never have accepted places till he and two others had been impeached. This is my present political creed, and so ends my catechism. Yet one word more: I think that Burke's mad obloquy against Lord Shelburne, and those virulent pamphlets in which he certainly must have had a hand, will do more to fix him in his office than anything else. By coming into Yorkshire to Lord Fitzwilliam's last summer, and there wrangling with various of his Lordship's visitors about Parliamentary Reform, he, in like manner, indisposed several gentlemen of property and consequence against that noble lord. If therefore he has not a quarter of that consequence which Lord Rockingham had (which will certainly be the case) in this county, he may lay it all to the effect of his friend's eloquence.[1]

I have heard that your printing-house has been robbed: I hope you have lost nothing of great consequence. On this topic I think you might employ another hand. Adieu! I am going in my character of Justice of the Peace to attend at St. Peter's session. Pray have you heard any particulars of our Archbishop's speech to the Queen? I hear it was on the old topic.

Yours most sincerely,
W. MASON.

[1] "What has become of Mason, and when does he move southward? Perhaps he is drilling his parishioners for Sir George Saville's regiment, or composing martial music for the York Train Bands. Poets have done wonders in war, as Tyrtæus can witness." *Mr. Whitehead to Lord Harcourt, July* 1, 1778. (MS.) "Mason is ten times more patriotic, as he calls it, than ever." *Ditto, Sept.* 18, 1782. (MS.)—CUNNINGHAM.

2214. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 14, 1782.

I HAVE been so extremely ill, Madam, that I was utterly incapable of dictating two lines, nor could I give you any account of myself but what was as bad as possible. Since yesterday morning I am certainly out of all manner of danger, but my breast is still so weak that I cannot speak to be heard without uneasiness, and therefore I must beg your Ladyship will excuse my saying any more now. You shall have a better account as soon as I am able to give it.

2215. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 17, 1782.

ON not seeing nor hearing anything of your nephew, I sent to his house, and learnt, to my mortification, that he neither is in town nor is expected. This forces me, though little able, to say a few words to you myself. I have been extremely ill, though not dangerously, but am much mended within these two days; yet my breast is still so weak, that I must not dictate more than is absolutely necessary.

I have received and sent to Lord Orford your letter, the drawing, and the draft: on account of the last, I suppose he will forget all three; but *I* shall not, nor shall let *him*. I must obey Cavalier Mozzi, though to his own prejudice, if he insists upon it; still I hope Mr. Duane will be able to prevent great injustice; but Lord knows when we shall begin. I, at present, am utterly incapable; and, last Friday night, not only poor Mr. Duane, but Sharpe too, were within an inch of losing every paper they had in the world, and all those in their custody. A great fire broke out in Lincoln's Inn at eleven at night, and consumed twelve sets of chambers; but, beginning in a garret, most people saved their papers, as both Duane and Sharpe did; though the latter at first absolutely lost his senses, and ran about distracted, not knowing what he said or did. I conclude that I shall be recovered before he will have put his papers into order again. These are untoward accidents for poor Mozzi, but unavoidable.

I have been so entirely shut up and incapable of seeing anybody,

that I neither know any politics, nor have breath to relate them if I did. The Peace seems at a stand; I know not why. We are prepared for the attack on Jamaica, and Spanish bravados are sunk much below par. I must finish, for I have quite exhausted myself.

Yours ever.

2216. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Christmas night, 1782.

I AM as persevering as Widdrington in 'Chevy Chace,' who fought with his stumps, for I am now undertaking to write to you without a finger, Madam. My hand is still swaddled in the bootikin, yet it is less irksome than to dictate. I am wonderfully recovered, and could walk about my room without a stick, if Tonton did not caper against me and throw me down, for I have no more elasticity in my joints than the tail of a paper-kite. Sleep is my great restorative; no dormouse beats me. Nay, I do not even look so ill as I have a right to do, though to be sure I might be admitted at the Resurrection without being rejected for a counterfeit corpse: but I cut short details about myself; the gout is a subject of no variety.

I cannot repay your Ladyship's story of 'L'Amant Voleur.' We continue to have robbers of the public, and of individuals, but their passions are all instigated *par les beaux yeux d'une cassette.* However, I have had an adventure not unentertaining. T'other day I received a letter from Lady Aldborough, an Irish Countess, whom I never saw in my days, but for one quarter of an hour seven years ago at old Lady Shelburne's. All she desires of me is, to select, correct, and print a sufficient number of her father's Poems (whom she vulgarly calls the Honourable Nick Herbert) to make a quarto pamphlet, as she does not care to *give* or *sell* them to a bookseller, and then she concludes I will admit him into my catalogue of 'Noble Authors.' Her Lord, she says, is too much engaged in politics when at Dublin, and with improvements of his estate when in the country (which I am told he has improved to none at all) to assort the Poems—and then, as ladies are abominably said to tell their minds in the postscript, she orders me to inclose my answer to her Lord *that it may come to her free.* Thus I may lay out 30*l.* or 40*l.* for her, and she would not give sixpence to know whether I will or not. I have sent a most respectful no, and have saved her the sixpence, which is all I shall save her.

I have received a much more flattering compliment, and as disinterested as her Ladyship's was the contrary. Mr. Bull, to amuse me when I was ill, sent me my 'Royal and Noble Authors' let into four sumptuous folios in red morocco gilt, with beautiful impressions of almost all the personages of whom there are prints. As they came when I was at the worst, I sent him word that if I might compare little things with great, he put me in mind of Queen Elizabeth, who laid an Earl's robes on Lord Hunsdon's death-bed.

Mrs. Siddons continues to be the mode, and to be modest and sensible. She declines great dinners, and says her business and the cares of her family take up her whole time. When Lord Carlisle carried her the tribute-money from Brooks's, he said she was not *maniérée* enough. "I suppose she was grateful," said my niece, Lady Maria. Mrs. Siddons was desired to play 'Medea' and 'Lady Macbeth.'—"No," she replied, "she did not look on them as female characters." She was questioned about her transactions with Garrick: she said, "He did nothing but put her out; that he told her she moved her right hand when it should have been her left.—In short," said she, "I found I must not shade the tip of his nose."

Have you seen the last two volumes of Bachaumont's 'Mémoires Secrets,' Madam? if you have not, don't give yourself the trouble; there is but one tolerable trait, but that is charming. They have hung a room at Ferney with portraits of Voltaire's friends. Under the Abbé de Lille, the translator of Virgil, they have placed this happy application,—

Nulli flebilior quam tibi, Virgili.

They again talk much of peace. Oh! let it come! We have lost territories enough, and got heroes enough in their room! If it is a bad peace, at least we shall not be fools for making it; when we have been, as we have always been, masters to make as good an one as we pleased. I don't suppose our enemies will be as obliging idiots.

You cannot imagine, Madam, how long I have been engraving this letter. I am in debt for some others, but my secretary of state must answer them, for I find our royal breast is as tired as our hand.

Yo EL. REY.

2217. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 7, 1783.

THOUGH the newspapers have advertised a book called 'Every Man his own Letter-writer,' I doubt it will not keep me so long. I really have no movement in any finger of my right hand but my thumb; and with so serious an excuse, should employ my secretary, if I were not more ashamed to dictate my nonsense, as Lady Anne justly calls it, than to write it. It is no more uneasy to write than to speak the first foolish thing that comes into one's head; but to oblige a third person not only to hear, but transcribe it, is being such a simpleton in cool blood, that if I write by proxy, my letters will have no more nonsense or sense, than those which royal personages send to one another from the Secretary's Office on births and deaths.

I have taken the air, and might have done so a week ago, but was in dread of a relapse. However, as I am all recovered but my hand, and as I fear there is no chance of that ever being well again, I must determine to carry it about in its night-gown, or stay at home for my short forever.

I know nothing, at least nothing that your Ladyship would care about more than I do. I have a general notion about treaties of peace, which the present has not hitherto contradicted. It is, that when peace is necessary to the mutual views of two prime-ministers of two hostile nations, it is clapped up in an instant, the material articles being postponed, to be adjusted afterwards by Commissaries, —but that, if they go into discussions, the same causes remain for dispute and quarrel, that made the war—and then the treaty breaks off. I hope that is not the case at present—I am very willing not to be a prophet in my own country. *On pretend* that certain invisible machines, of which one heard much a year or two ago, and which were said to be constructed of cork, and to be worn somewhere or other behind, are now to be transplanted somewhere before, in imitation of the Duchess of Devonshire's pregnancy, as all under-jaws advanced upon the same principle. *Apropos*, Lady Jersey desired Mr. Stonhewer to order me to ask Mr. Hayley what had cured him when his head was disordered, her Ladyship having a relation in that situation. I sent her word that I not only was not acquainted with, but had never seen him, yet I could tell her

his nostrum; he had been put into a course of breast-milk, and sucked the nine Muses, and is now as tame as a lamb.

As this letter, Madam, is written entirely *in usum* of the Dauphiness Anne, it is long enough—at least my hand finds so, which has not attempted a quarter so much, since I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship last, and now aches a good deal.

2218. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Jan. 7, 1783.

I KNOW not what to do about your complaint on your letters being produced against General Murray, though it is very well founded.[1] Your nephew is not, has not been, in town. When he comes, I will speak to him. For myself, I never saw Murray, nor know who are his connections. For Mr. Conway, as Commander-in-Chief, it would be most improper for him to take the least part, the trial pending. I have not heard it named since I came to town, but that it would be finished last week; which, however, I believe it is not. As I have not been out of my house yet, but twice to take the air, and seen only the few that come to me, I can give you little account of the transactions or conversation of the world. For above three weeks I was too ill to see anybody but my most intimate friends; and at present the town is deserted, and will be till Saturday sevennight, the Birth-day. I do, as you see, write myself, yet my only motion is in my thumb and wrist. I can scarcely bend any other joint of my right hand, and believe never shall: thence, writing being difficult and even painful, I very seldom attempt it, and generally employ a secretary.

The Peace is certainly not yet arrived. Armaments, and from them the Stocks, look inauspiciously; I know nothing more.

I told you Lord Mountstuart was leaving Turin. He came the day before yesterday: but my intelligence of Lord Northington's succeeding him was not equally authentic; at least, he is not yet named.

From Mr. Duane not a word yet; nor have I been well enough to do business had he come to me: at sixty-five one does not recover in a moment from an attack in ten places, and with so weak a breast as mine. All the accounts I receive of my nephew speak him

[1] Sir William Draper produced on the trial a letter of Sir Horace Mann, who had found fault with General Murray.—WALPOLE.

frantic; you shall judge from one. One of his footmen was carried before Lord Walpole for getting a bastard, and committed to prison, as usual. Lord Orford wrote a most angry letter to his cousin; and told him, that when he himself was at Hull with his militia, his servants and soldiers got so many children, that the Mayor thanked him for such a bounteous propagation of the species. He himself believes he has contributed; a weeding girl, whom he took out of his garden and keeps, having lately made him a present of a daughter: but I believe the Mayor of Hull might thank one of the footmen. All this is mighty indifferent to me, who have done caring about him. Indeed, it would be hard to confine my nephew while Lord George Gordon is at large; who is daily trying mischiefs that do not tend to the propagation of the species, and is not so mad as to be excusable. I must now repose my hand—my letter will not set out till Friday. As I have leisure enough, there is no occasion to fatigue myself: yet I must learn new matter if I add more.

Thursday, 9th.

General Murray's trial, it seems, has been finished some days; but, the report not having been yet made to the King, the event is not known, as Courts-Martial never disclose their sentence till ratified by Majesty. In general, it is not thought that Sir William Draper made out much.

The Peace is out of order with an ague—the cold fit is on at present; but, as Mr. Townshend has not notified to the City that it is given over, I trust the doctors have still hopes.

Friday has produced nothing—the voice of the town is war: still, till the negotiation is declared to be broken off, I will believe and hope that it is yet going on, and may end happily.

2219. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Thursday, Jan. 23, 1783.

After so long a suspense, which, I own, staggered my faith, the Preliminaries of Peace are signed, and the wounds of the groaning world may be closed. What the terms are, or how they will be approved or condemned, is no part of my consideration. I have long eagerly wished for peace, and scarce expected to live to see it. I shall look to no more eras!—the rest will be like the

beginning of a new volume, of which I am only to see a few pages!

The Parliament met on Tuesday, but the definitive courier did not arrive till yesterday noon; so, on the first day all the troops on every side lay on their arms, and not a shot was fired.

Friday.

You will find that my intelligence is not very good; for the courier did not arrive till yesterday evening. It is true, the French agent had got notice sooner; and Lord Clermont[1] had a letter on Wednesday (whence the report) from the Duchesse de Polignac,[2] saying the Preliminaries were signed. I doubt there was a little jockeyship in this, and that the French had contrived to retard the courier, that they might buy into our Stocks before the rise. Madame de Pompadour made a vigorous job by such a manœuvre at the Peace of Paris.

Well! France, Spain, and America are at peace with us; but not Holland, which has only agreed yet to a suspension of arms. It looks as if they did not find themselves so much thought on as they expected — a mighty new case, indeed, for little folks to be sacrificed by great! I don't tell you that this is so; it is only an *il me semble:* I know no secrets, nor trouble myself about *them.*

Your great Mediterranean object is safe—Gibraltar. Whatever questionable points there may be in the treaty, they cannot, be what they will, occasion half the clamour that the reddition of *Rock-Elliot* would have made. There are many, I believe, who think it is *in the parish of St. Martin's in the Fields* (to talk in the language of Acts of parliament), and would as easily have relinquished the Isle of Wight, which French modesty once demanded.[3] His Catholic Majesty's obstinacy has had a *démenti*, for a royal mule may be restive in vain.

It had been pity to have died of my late fit of the gout, when Peace, for which I had so long ardently sighed, was so near! I shall certainly not be one of the disapprovers. Nay, I shall certainly find it better than I expected (I know when[4]) we should obtain. On

[1] William Henry Fortescue, Lord Clermont, an Irish peer, who went frequently to Paris, where his wife was taken much notice of by the Queen of France.—Walpole. Compare story of Lady Clermont and the Princess Amelia in Walpole's Letter to Lord Harcourt of 5th Aug., 1783.—Cunningham.

[2] The principal favourite of the Queen of France.—Walpole.

[3] About 1781 or 1782, when some overtures of peace had been made from England. —Walpole.

[4] In 1779, when the French fleet was off Plymouth.—Walpole.

that subject I shall not expatiate—nay, nor talk more of the Peace, as I know so little of the matter.

The report on General Murray's case is not yet made; nor will be, they say, till Monday. The reading over the evidence took up many days. When I see your nephew, I will charge him with your apology to the General, if you have not.

This is a brief letter, but the matter will stand in lieu of length. As the second volume of winter is but begun, there will probably be no want of topics. It is Parliament that I call winter, begin and end when it will. The two Houses make the seasons, and produce storms more regularly than our elements. Adieu!

2220. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 25, 1783.

I HAVE had so little to say, Madam, and so much to do in making visits of thanks to the charitable who visited me in my illness, that I have not been so correspondent as usual. I have also been for two days at Strawberry, where it snowed most of the time. In truth I have still a more real cause for silence—the lameness of this hand, which can write but a few lines at a time, and must rest every quarter of an hour; so that the expedition with which I used to despatch my letters is quite gone, and they are become a pain instead of an amusement.

You know, to be sure, Madam, that the peace is arrived. I cannot express how glad I am. I care not a straw what the terms are, which I believe I know more imperfectly than anybody in London. I am not apt to love details—my wish was to have peace, and the next, to see America secure of its liberty. Whether it will make good use of it, is another point. It has an opportunity that never occurred in the world before, of being able to select the best parts of every known constitution; but I suppose it will not, as too prejudiced against royalty to adopt it even as a corrective of aristocracy and democracy, though *our* system has proved that every evil had better have two enemies to contend with than one, as the third may turn the scale on every emergence; but when the one defeats the only other, it is decisive. In short, it is necessary there should be government, but that government should be checked as much as those it controls; for one man, or a few, or a multitude, are still men, and consequently not fit to be trusted with unlimited

power. The misfortune is, that men cannot be trusted with the power of doing right, without having the power of doing wrong too, and the more you limit them, the more they pant for greater latitude. However, the more they are limited, the farther they have to go before they acquire the boundless latitude they long for. These are some of my visions, which the experience of all ages and countries has shown, are such as scarce ever have been realised.

Saturday, 26th.

I had written the above on Wednesday; but on seeing our Lord on Thursday, did not finish it. Well, Madam, you must hate only the Dutch. The French and the Spaniards are our good friends, and you may *lawfully* speak well even of the Americans, without being called a rebel and republican, as I was by Marie Alacoque. I know few of the terms of the preliminaries, but that Gibraltar or Rock-Elliot is still in the parish of St. Martin's in the Fields. When I do learn all the articles, I intend to like all, for I must be so fair as to say that they will be better than I expected we should ever obtain. Nay, if the French had not been as great blunderbusses as we, they might have reduced us much lower long ago. If Ireland has slipped out of our yoke too, the French have no title to boast, who might have had it themselves if they had thought of it before the volunteers. Now I hope it will be a perpetual thorn in their sides.

As one is always open to new calamities on the cessation of the old, I now expect that one shall be robbed and murdered two or three times a day, ay, and a night, more than ever, on disbanding the army; and then we shall have such swarms of French, yes, and insolent ones too! What is that to me? Oh! a great deal, Madam; they will come to see Strawberry, perhaps have recommendations, and I must ask them to dine! Is that nothing to a poor superannuated invalid?

I know no news—nay, news are but beginning; news out of Parliament-tide are fruits out of season, have not the true flavour. Besides, when Lord Ossory is in town, I am like a vice-chancellor, who is nobody when his principal is on the spot. I shall, therefore, not trespass any longer on his office, but wish your Ladyship good night.

2221. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

The Martyrdom, 1783.

Thirdly, Madam, if I was never to write to your Ladyship till I have the full and free use of every finger of my right hand, I should never write again, for I certainly shall recover none of the four; and if I could not move the joint of the thumb, I should not be able to use a pen at all. As you perceive I can, I hope you will not disband the four invalids for the sake of old Colonel Thumb, who begs to die in your service.

Secondly, I do rejoice in the peace, and will, though I find it grows very unpopular,—and fourthly, I will not correct my historic errors: I am not apt to recant my tenets, nor will give up the only King that I have defended; especially as I shall never enter the *sanctum sanctorum*, where one's religion, like a chameleon, takes the hue of the place the instant one enters it. One quality of the chameleon I have, and rejoice in having: the orbit of my eye allows me to look backward; other creeping things only see before them, and think but of advancing: I keep my eye on what I have always been and choose to be uniform. It will not be difficult now to hold out a little while longer.

I was last night at Mrs. Montagu's to hear Le Texier read 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme,' and was tired to death; for though it had merit at first in the infancy of comedy, it is mere farce, and has no characters. But the famous phrase struck me as applicable to Cumberland, who has just produced a tragedy in prose; he has thought that he had often written verses, and did not know that he had all his life been writing prose.

We are going to suffer an inundation of French. It is better at least than an invasion of them, which I cannot conceive why they have not committed. Have you seen his Majesty of Prussia's intimation to the Dutch that he intends to saddle them with the House of Orange for the sake of preserving their *liberty?* I remember a story of a lady who had a favourite plump lark, of which she was very fond. On going out of town, she gave strict orders to her housemaid to take the tenderest care of it. The woman promised. "No, I am sure you will neglect it and starve it." "Lord! Madam, how can your Ladyship think so? I assure

you—" "No, I know you will starve it!" "Come, I know what I will do; I'll kill it and eat it."

There is an insurrection at Portsmouth of a Scotch regiment, who will not go and plunder the remainder of the Indies; and Lord George Gordon, who is excellent at putting out fires, has offered to go and appease them. How can anybody say that there is a dearth of virtue and patriotism?

P. S. Madame de Virri [Miss Speed] is dead suddenly, as she was just coming to England.

2222. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Feb. 3, 1783.

Though I begin my letter on this 3rd, I do not know whether it will embark for some days. I hate to send you maimed accounts, which instead of informing can only perplex you. Everything you wish to know is in an embryo state. You may wonder, as General Murray's sentence is public, that I have not transmitted it to you; the newspapers have: yet it is far from an affair concluded. The sentence was a strange one; yet, I imagine, calculated to prevent very desperate consequences between a madman and a very hot headed one. Of twenty-nine charges they pronounced twenty-seven trifling; and on the two others, that seem not very grave reprimanded Murray; and then ordered the accuser and accusee to make mutual apologies to each other. Draper, though the greater Bedlamite, obeyed: Murray would not utter all that was enjoined, and was put under arrest. It seems that Draper had during the siege used, even in writing, most harsh expressions to his commander. Pains are taking to mollify the latter, and reconcile him to submission—there I must leave their history till I know how it ends.

I can tell you nothing more definite about the Peace. The ratification of the preliminaries is expected, they say, this week. Scarcely anything has been said on the subject yet in Parliament; but as the articles, since published, seem to give much offence, it is not probable that the House of Commons should become the Temple of Silence on this occasion. You will not expect me, who know nothing of trade, &c., to specify the supposed grievances. I am content with peace in the lump: I did not suppose that the loss

of America and Minorca, &c., would improve our commerce or glory; nor do I wonder that they who threw them away had rather blame anybody than themselves.

The papers will tell you of a little disturbance at Portsmouth, where a Scotch regiment, destined for the East Indies, mutinied, claiming a promise of being disbanded at the peace. They almost murdered their Colonel, but have been quieted, on assurance that none shall go in-voluntarily. A second regiment caught the spirit, but were more easily pacified. Would not one think that our Nabobs have drained the Indies, when men would rather go back to Scotland than to mines of gold and diamonds?

Lord Mountstuart will be no longer your neighbour; he goes to Madrid, and Lord Carmarthen to Paris. I have not heard who is to come from the latter—I mean as ambassador: a multitude of individuals are expected, and above the rest the Duc de Chartres.

I have not yet heard anything of your nephew, but, by accident, that he will come to town for the sake of his daughters. His absence is inconvenient to me, or rather to you; as he might tell you perhaps twenty things that escape me, who have totally quitted public places, and go but to a very few private houses. However, you lose little worth knowing. Our newspapers are grown such minute registers of everything that happens, and still more of everything that is said to have happened, that you would easily perceive if I omitted anything of consequence. I do little more than confirm the rare truths by mentioning them. The swarms of daily lies die every evening. There is another character due to our papers; if they do get hold of truth, they are sure of overlaying it by blunders; scarcely ever do they state any event in accurate terms or faithful narratives, unless when there are any melancholy circumstances that had better be suppressed. Those they detail minutely, to the great satisfaction of a malignant public, and to the grief of the families concerned: reason sufficient, one should think, for everybody to discourage such vehicles of ill-nature. A pretty woman that makes, or is supposed to have made, a slip, is hunted down as inveterately as a Prime Minister used to be: I do not mean that the latter escapes the better for having everybody associated with him. Our newspapers, like German princes, hunt all kinds of game at once—boars, wolves, foxes, hares, rabbits; a mouse would not have quarter if it came in their way. Adieu for the present!

Sunday, 9th.

But this morning I have learnt the termination of General Murray's affair. He wanted to resign his regiment rather than submit, though he had been ruined by it; having three children and his wife big with a fourth, for whom he begged a pension of three hundred a year. The King excused him the reprimand on the two charges; and General Murray has laboured with so much zeal and good-nature, that at last he prevailed on him and the Court-Martial to let him alter *one* word of the apology. This is a bigger detail than I should have studied but to satisfy you. My letter will now set out on Tuesday: from you it is long since I had one.

Monday, 10th.

The ratification of the Preliminaries by France is come, and that of Spain is expected in a week. This day sevennight is to be the great combat in both Houses; at least, warm opposition is talked of: but such rumours are far from being always verified. For this last week there has been talk of changes; yet only one has happened, the resignation of Lord Carlisle, who, it is said, disapproves the sacrifice of the Loyalists. Others think he is more discontent at not going Ambassador to Paris. I should not think these reports worth mentioning, but that the newspapers have been full of them, though they certainly know nothing of the matter. Neither the old Ministry, nor the fragment of the last, have yet spoken out; and therefore the public can form no judgment what will happen. The capital point, the Peace, is attained. Factions there will always be; the world cannot stand stock-still. War is a tragedy; other politics but a farce. It is plain, mankind think so; for, however occupied the persons concerned are by what they are interested in, how little do people dwell upon what is past, unless it has come to blows! How often, when in Parliament, did I hear questions called "the most important that had ever come before the House," which a twelvemonth after no mortal remembered! Adieu!

P.S. The King has instituted a new order of knighthood [St. Patrick] in Ireland. There are to be sixteen, and they are to wear a watered light blue ribbon.

2223. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 8, 1783.

Your Dryads must go into black gloves, Madam: their father-in-law, Lady Nature's second husband, is dead! Mr. Brown dropped down at his own door yesterday. The death of the second monarch of Landscape is a considerable event to me, the historian of that kingdom—the political world, I believe, is more occupied by the resignation of Lord Carlisle; but the petty incidents of the Red Book are much below my notice, and I care not who is grubbed up or transplanted. The American war is terminated, to my great satisfaction, and there end my politics! I cannot tap a new chapter; but am returned to all my old studies, and read over again my favourite authors on times past; you must not be surprised if I should send you a collection of Tonton's *bons-mots:* I have found a precedent for such a work. A grave author wrote a book on the Hunt of the Grand Senechal of Normandy, and of *les* DITS *du bon chien* SOUILLARD, *qui fut au Roi Loy de France onzieme du nom. Louis XII.*, the reverse of the predecessor of the same name, did not leave to his historian to celebrate his dog *Relais*, but did him the honour of being his biographer himself; and for a reason that was becoming so excellent a King. It was *pour animer les descendans d'un si brave chien à se rendre aussi bons que lui, et encore meilleurs.* It was great pity that the Cardinal d'Amboise had no bastard puppies, or to be sure his Majesty would have written his Prime Minister's life too, for a model to his successors.

As this is a very gossiping letter about nothings, I will tell your Ladyship an incident that struck me the other night. Lady Beaulieu thought Lady Albemarle mourned too long for Lady Vere; Mrs. Hussey said, "Madam, they were cousin-germans." I scoffed at Mrs. Hussey, thinking them removed by two or three generations, but she was in the right; Lady Albemarle is daughter of the first Duke of Richmond, and Lord Vere was son of the first Duke of St. Albans; yet Charles II. has been dead ninety-eight years; nay, Lady Albemarle or the Bishop of Hereford [Beauclerk] may mourn some years hence for the other. Lady Albemarle supped at Lady Aylesbury's on Sunday night, drank two glasses of Champagne, and stayed till past one in as good spirits as ever I saw her.

There has been a more rapid succession in another family. Several years ago, when Lord Strafford and I were at Lord Thomond's, we walked to Walden Church, and were shown in a vault there the coffins of eleven Earls and Countesses of Suffolk that had died since 1700. With this last Earl there have been seven more since that time. You will not wonder, Madam, that I know no modern news, when I am so deep in the lore of obituaries! Your other correspondents will tell you *les dits et gestes du siècle;* it is more seemly for me to concern myself about past generations than about the rising one.

2224. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 10, 1783.

I HAVE at last received your 'Fresnoy' from Sir Joshua. You have made it a very handsome book; and I am pleased that you have added Gray's 'Chronologic List.' Sir Joshua has lately given me too his last Discourse to the Academy, which I will tell you, *entre nous,* is rather an apology for, or an avowal of, the object of his own style, that is effect, or impression on all sorts of spectators. This lesson will rather do hurt than good on his disciples, and make them neglect all kind of finishing. Nor is he judicious in quoting Vandyck, who at least specified silks, satins, velvets. Sir Joshua's draperies represent clothes, never their materials. Yet more: Vandyck and Sir Godfrey Kneller excelled all painters in hands; Sir Joshua's are seldom even tolerably drawn. I saw t'other day, one of, if not the best of his works, the portrait of Lord Richard Cavendish. Little is distinguished but the head and hand; yet the latter, though nearest to the spectator, is abominably bad: so are those of my Three Nieces; and though the effect of the whole is charming, the details are slovenly, the faces only red and white; and his journeyman, as if to distinguish himself, has finished the lock and key of the table like a Dutch flower-painter.[1]

I observe that you say that in Pope's 'Epistle to Jervas' he changed *Wortley* for *Worsley* in later editions, but surely it was *Worsley* in the earliest editions. I did not know that it had ever been printed Wortley, being so possessed of its being *Worsley* that I did not perceive the change. Lady Worsley, mother of Lady Carteret, was a beauty, and friend of Pope.

[1] See *ante,* letter to Mason, 28th May, 1780.—CUNNINGHAM.

Are you not concerned for the death of [Capability] Brown? I made a bad Epitaph for him, which, if you please, you may re-colour with any tints that remain on your pallet with which you repainted 'Fresnoy:' here it is:—

With one lost Paradise the name
Of our first ancestor is stained;
Brown shall enjoy unsullied fame
For many a Paradise regained.

I have a mind, should you approve it, to call Designers of Gardens, *Gardenists*, to distinguish them from *Gardeners;* or *Landscapists*. I wish you would coin a term for the art itself.[1]

I have heard nothing of Cumberland's pedestrian tragedy, but that all the men laughed at, all the women cried at it. I know no more literary news, and I have done with all other. Adieu!

Your coalition with Johnson is super-excellent, yet have I lived so long and seen so many strange evolutions, that, do you know, I should not be quite surprised if it were a reality, and not a Parody? Chaos is in good earnest come again, and were not the nation at once so dissipated, and so detached from all esteem for persons, which it is impossible to feel, I should expect very serious consequences. But as in the primitive chaos, though all the elements were at strife, we are not told of any bloodshed, that neither the fire was drowned, nor the water boiled over. I conclude the present confusion will subside in a new *Creation;* that the Devil will steal into Paradise, that the new couple will be driven out of it again, after they have filled their bellies, and that things will go on as they were in the beginning, are now, and shall be for ever more. Such being my idea of politics, I should if I had not, as you know, already bidden adieu to them, take a still more solemn leave of them now. I am willing to die with what little honesty and consistency I have. How that would be possible I do not see, when all principles are confounded. One cannot be of a party by one's self, and where is that one to which I would say I appertain? To none; absolutely to none. Nor would that be the strongest objection. To stand single may be the honestest part, but then it must be a negative one.

[1] "Poor Brown! I have really been much concerned and hurt at his unexpected death; for, exclusive of the admiration I naturally feel for true genius in every art, I respected that man's private character, and ever found him obliging, good-humoured, and accommodating in the highest degree; while I felt an affection for him, and liked his company, in spite of his *puns.*"—*From Lord Harcourt's Correspondence with Mason, in MS.*—MITFORD.

What can an insulated man do? no good. If connected, I fear (as my conscience is a little timid) he may do more harm than good. In short, the more I reflect, the less am I satisfied with the profession of politician, and therefore my remnant shall not be discoloured with it. Personal interests or personal passions will creep into the paste, and perhaps leaven the whole lump. I wash my hands of it.

I have not seen the new edition of your 'Garden' advertised, or should certainly have sent for it. I do want you to give me three or four impressions of your own Head and of Gray's—I mean of the small quartos. You know the principal occupation of my dotage is *making books*, that is, dressing them up with prints and pretty bindings; a charming amusement for a superannuated child, and which neither hurts the eyes nor employs the head. Your 'Fresnoy' is to be decorated proudly. Thus I have answered your kind question and told you that I am very well, in short a very fine boy of my age, though I have neither cut any teeth, nor lost any; my hand, too, though very rickety, you see can walk alone again. Adieu!

Yours entirely,

H. WALPOLE.[1]

March 7, 1783.

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, March 5, 1783.

Now that chaos is come again, I hold myself absolved from every obligation. I shall therefore scorn to make any apology to you for my late silence. I have found myself better employment than that of writing either to you or any of my former friends. I have gone a great way towards a literary coalition with Dr. Johnson: our object is no less than the complete administration of the Blue Stocking Club, which we mean to govern in a truly constitutional way, without any concurrence from Madam Montagu. All our arrangements are not finally settled; Cumberland will not come into our plan, unless I give him my word and honour that I will write prologues to all the plays he has now on the stocks, or shall have on the stocks. Hard terms as these are, I believe I shall have public spirit enough to accede to them.

I never saw a man so placable, and even reasonable, as Johnson himself; he is willing to own Gray's Odes tolerable, provided I will not insist on his liking blank verse; and as we are both agreed in thinking Macpherson the forger of Ossian, we have already decided that he shall be expelled the club. Mrs. Montagu, however, is still so obstinate, that she holds her feast of shells in her feather dressing-room: she will however certainly, in due time, be forced to submit to our terms. Soame Jenyns has absolutely refused to take the lead in her conversaziones, pleading age and infirmities, and the lack of his former volatile spirits. Smelt has been sent for from the banks of the Swale; but he declares he has done both with the courtly and witty world. In short, if we can only keep together, we shall carry our point hollow. I am so clear in this, that I think I can safely offer you the place of Epigrammatist General, if you will accept it; but any other that you are less fit for would suit our administration better. You must, however, be sure to follow our leading principle, which is, that when you have read the worst poem that ever was written, you must immediately make the author of it your bosom friend, and declare that it is not writings but writers that you hold in estimation. Pray give me your sentiments upon this point immediately, for we shall be in power incontinently.

With these great ideas in my head, you cannot wonder that I am careless as to any

2225. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 18, 1783—*a great-grandchild of* 1688.

PRAY, Madam, do not imagine that I pretend to send you a cool newspaper, when probably you have had my intelligence anticipated

news you can send me; besides I know you can tell me no more than Tonton could of what is going forward at St. James's. You laid aside your political correspondence with me in the very nick of time, for I should have defied you to have carried it on to the present moment. You are tolerably good at description; but Milton failed when he attempted to describe the limbo of vanity: were you to write to me now, you must describe the limbo of incoherency, which I look upon as a much harder task. Let us talk of something within the sphere of common sense. My edition of 'Fresnoy,' that is, Graham's, printed 1716, in the Epistle to Jervas, reads *Wortley*,[1] and this is the second edition; undoubtedly it was so in the first; but, on second thoughts, this is the first in which that epistle was printed. Dryden's own in quarto only preceded it. I wish I had mentioned this to you before I printed my note, that I might have added to it your notices about Lady Worsley. I wish, too, I had referred my reader to your account of Jervas, to authorise what I had said of him, for all readers do not know that he was a bad painter. I like your epigram on poor Brown much, and your new invented term of Gardenists; I wish I and my commentator had been possessed of it before my last edition was published, for published I suppose it now is, as it was printed off three weeks ago; but if you would see it you must buy it, for of it I make no presents, looking upon it as a second edition. Pray give me a line to assure me of your health: I inquire not after that of my country.

Yours, &c.,

W. MASON.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 4, 1783.

WHAT can a man write about in these days? these chaotic days? Was I to write in my last vein, and tell you that my friend Lexiphanes [Dr. Johnson] and I had been employed in raising a loan to finish Madam Montagu's feather dressing-room, and that we had paid the price of ostrich feathers for goose-quills, you would hardly take it for an excuse, and think me as tedious as I suppose the dramatised Tristram Shandy may be: therefore I will only beg your pardon for not writing sooner, and for × not sending (what indeed I have not) the impressions you desired of the etching of my noble self. I have, indeed, a few of the two plates of Mr. Gray, and had anybody gone from this part of the world to town, you would have had them ere this; but they shall be sent the first opportunity. In the mean time I have written to Mr. Stonhewer to tell him that Carter, my former servant (who I fear is now half-starving in town), has the plate of my head, and to bid him bring a few copies to you. He is a good copyist in oil; and if you could recommend him to anybody who wants a picture cheaply and faithfully copied, he would answer their purpose, and be an act of charity.

If you wish to know anything of my present occupations, intentions, &c., &c., I refer you to either Lord Harcourt or Mr. Stonhewer: the history of myself is not

[1] And Pope's own edition of 1717 of his Works reads *Wortley*. When he quarrelled with Lady Mary, he transferred the compliment, by the alteration of a single letter, to Lady Worsley.—CUNNINGHAM.

by a courier: Oh dear, no; but as gazetteers think it their regular duty to specify everything that happens, as well as everything that does not, though all the world may know both, I acquaint your Ladyship, that at eight this morning (which eight o'clock was part of yesterday, Monday) the Administration was defeated on the very same field where another Administration was routed about this time twelvemonth, and, which makes the victory more memorable, the general who was beaten last year, and one of the generals who beat him, had joined their forces to fight the general, who had had a share over the vanquished one of this time twelvemonth.

This is all that is necessary to be told by me, who have ceased to be an *examiner*, and am only a *spectator*.

I will not distract you with any other news foreign to the big event of the day. You would listen to nothing else except conjectures; and those, though one cannot help forming them, would be so entirely coined by my own brain, that they would not assist you. I will not even answer any paragraph of your Ladyship's last, except one word about the loyalists. As I always apply my reflections to my own way of thinking, that is, consider what operation any great event will have in *my* system, I draw some sweetness from the dereliction of the loyalists. I do pity sincerely the conscientious among them, but I trust that this example will a little cure people of the distemper of loyalty. If the more zealous the *Rubiconians*, and those whose cause they promote against the general happiness, would ever read, or ever profit by what they might read, what a lesson would the American war be against aiming at extending power! *Quieta non movere* was the maxim of a man [Sir Robert Walpole], who I, who have seen a good deal, do not think wanted common sense; Lord Chatham, no doubt, bought us more glory, but very dearly. We have paid still dearer for losses and disgrace. My Quiet

worth writing twice over, or reading once over, and yet I have the vanity to think it a better history than the parliamentary history would be of precisely the same era; I mean from the time that I left York in February to the present moment.

I find on looking over what I have scribbled, that where the marginal × is, I have written something very like Irish. You may make a present of the sentence, if you please, to my Lord Northington; it may be of service to him. I rejoice that your rickety hand is able to walk alone; if it would now and then visit the most undeserving of its correspondents, it might employ itself very well, till you are in a habit of visiting the purchaser of Mr. Prado's villa. Pray tell me if it be really true that Barry the painter has put me in Elysium:[1] the papers have made me very vain with the thought. Adio!

[1] In his picture at the Society of Arts.—CUNNINGHAM.

Statesman was called the Father of Corruption, though his political parents and children had been, and have been full of the same blood. Was it a capital crime to bribe those *on sale* to promote the happiness of themselves and others, to bribe them to preserve the constitution and make the commerce of their country flourish? Very different experiments have been tried since. I beg your pardon, Madam, for wandering back to my own ideas; but when a revolution happens, it is natural to reflect on those one has seen. I am a Methusalem from the scenes I have seen; yet, t'other day, I made an acquaintance with one a little my senior; yet we are to be very intimate for a long time, for my new friend is but ninety-four. It is General Oglethorpe; I had not seen him these twenty years, yet knew him instantly. As he did not recollect me, I told him it was a proof how little he was altered, and I how much. I said I would visit him; he replied, "No, no; I can walk better than you; I will come to you." He is alert, upright, has his eyes, ears, and memory fresh. If you want any particulars of the last century, I can procure them, but I know nothing of what is to happen *to-morrow*.

P.S. I have just seen in the 'Public Advertiser' a passage in a letter from the Emperor to the Pope, which informs me how little the delegates of Heaven have occasion to *read*. Cæsar tells St. Peter, "that *he* possesses in his own breast a voice which tells what, as legislator and protector of Religion, he ought to pursue or desist from; and that voice, with the assistance of divine Grace, and the honest and just character which he feels in himself, can never lead him into error." There! Madam, there is imperial infallibility to some purpose! Henry VIII. undoubtedly felt the same inspiration when he became head of our Church; and I dare to say, that the Earls of Derby and the Dukes of Athol, till they sold the Isle of Man, had exactly the same unerring feelings. That inward voice, which the Greeks called *Gastromuthos*, prattles to every monarch before he can speak himself, and did so to Henry VI. in his cradle, though he lived to lose everything.

2226. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 18, 1783.

I HINTED to you that the Peace was not popular—you must make a prodigious stride from that warning: you must extend your idea to the brink of the precipice, and conceive—not that the peace is to be broken ere consummate, but that it has already overturned the peace-maker! It is not eleven o'clock of Tuesday morning, and the House of Commons, that sat yesterday on the preliminaries, has not been up three hours, after—in short, after carrying a question against Lord Shelburne, by 224 to 208. He was scarcely less beaten in the other House; where, even with the support of the Household troops, the Bishops, and the Scotch, he had but 69 votes to 55.

Particulars of this Revolution, which it must be, I do not pretend to tell you. The question moved by the Opposition I barely heard last night at the card-table at Princess Amelie's, who received a note from Lord Duncannon. It was a temperate but very artful one; declared against infringing the treaty, though announcing that the House would consider the terms. This is all I know: both Houses are but just gone to bed; and even the newspapers, who have been sitting up gaping for intelligence all night, have not gotten on their clean shirts yet.

Now will you be—and so by this time is everybody else—eager to know what will be next. That is precisely what I neither know nor guess; in which last point, no doubt, I differ from most people: but you know I always forbid myself conjectures; I have little opinion of my own penetration—nay, nor of any one's. I have a rule about penetration, which may be paradoxical, and yet I think there is good sense in it: it is this. How would a wise man calculate what is to happen? Why, he must state to himself appearances and causes, and then conclude that they would produce the natural consequences. Now, it is a thousand to one that some foolish circumstance or other interferes, influences some very unforeseen event, and destroys all his fine ratiocination: in short, some mistress, wife, servant, favourite, or clerk gives a sudden bias, and turns reason and its train aside; and the philosopher, who would have disdained to make an unlogical computation, finds all his penetration disappointed.

Well! though I cannot lead you a step forward, I will open a little of the back scene, which, at least, will prevent you from making wrong reflections. You must not then imagine that the mere articles of the Preliminaries have caused the approaching revolution; you must not suppose that any sacrifices of glory, interest, or dominion, nor even the dereliction of the Loyalists, though sounded the most loudly, occasioned the fermentation that has made the House of Commons boil over and cast off the Administration. More human causes than national honour and national interest, than commiseration and justice, made the fire beneath burn too intensely. In one word, my good friend, Lord North and Mr. Fox united their forces and defeated Lord Shelburne in a pitched battle. The town says, that he deferred treating with either till it was too late; and that he did treat with them when it was too late, even last week, when he was rejected by both. Whether *they* can agree better if they are to divide the spoils is now to be seen. But I shall not step over the threshold of next minute; sufficient to the day is the event thereof: I shall say no more, but what I replied (and often do reply, like an old man fond of his own sayings) to a person yesterday morning, who asked me "how all this would end?" I answered, "How will it begin?" That is the proper answer always on political emergencies. Politics never end: after struggles they come to a settlement, but consequences are chained to that settlement; yet I meant more. The first time I used the expression, *how will it begin?* was in the American war; it was that war that overturned a firm settlement: and when I was asked how it would end, I foresaw how often that question would be repeated, before any man would be able to answer it —the question of to-day is but one instance.

Tuesday, in the evening.

I own I was grown uneasy at not hearing from you, and sent to your nephew's on Saturday, and again to-day, having heard he was expected. He came to me two hours ago, and brought me a letter from you, which explains your silence in a very kind manner, as you forbore writing in pity to my weak hand; but you see, that, lame as all the fingers are but the thumb, I can write glibly. Indeed, excepting in my right hand, I am much the better for my late fit: it has cleared my blood, and revived my spirits.

When your nephew and I had gossipped over the great event of the morning, I did not forget your disquiet about General Murray, though everybody else has; as well as the controversy on foot in

print between Lord Cornwallis and Sir Henry Clinton.[1] The peace is the topic on the carpet, and has obliterated the war. Sir Horace junior will go to the General to-morrow, and, by his own prudent thought, will not tap the matter of your letters, not to put into his wild head what never came into it, or may be slipped out of it; but, should Murray mention the subject, your nephew will satisfy him of your innocence.

I can say no more now; nor have time to speak on the war you foresee between emperors and empresses. Though I have nothing to do with politics, I live so much at home, and my house is in so central a position, that it is a little coffee-house in a morning when the town is full, and I am perpetually interrupted. Adieu! you shall hear again as soon as the prospect clears. I do not send you random guesses and reports.

2227. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Monday evening, Feb. 24, 1783.

The victory of the Opposition on Tuesday last was followed by another on Friday. Lord Shelburne took Saturday to consider on it; yesterday morning acquainted the Cabinet with his intention of retiring; notified that resolution to the rest of his adherents in the evening, and resigned his post this morning. In fact, it would have been difficult to maintain it against a House of Commons in which he had lost the majority, and in which the supplies are not yet voted. Parliaments are not to be governed when they will not give money to govern them by. This Parliament, too, has gotten an ugly trick of turning out even those who did pay them handsomely;[2] and yet some people in the country are so visionary as to imagine they could improve the constitution or construction of the House of Commons. I don't know what such folks would have, if they are not content with the demolition of two Administrations in one year!

As Lord Shelburne has been routed by the united forces of Lord North and Mr. Fox, it is supposed that these two chieftains will form a new Administration of their friends, though neither will be the nominal Premier; the first declaring against being *the Minister*

[1] This controversy was on the subject of the last campaign in America.—Walpole.
[2] Lord North.—Walpole.

again, and the Duke of Portland being the ostensible successor of Lord Rockingham. From this junction the new Administration is expected; but how it is to be transacted, or how arranged, I am totally ignorant.

The triumphant party declare for adherence to the Peace, though they condemn it. Indeed, I hope it will be inviolate. It is not within the compass of my knowledge to pronounce whether we could have had better terms or not. They are better than, for some years, I have thought we could obtain; and though I was far from admiring Lord Shelburne's conduct last spring,[1] and have been as far from applauding his behaviour since, which has been improper in every light, still I am glad that he did make peace; and I am not less persuaded, that, had the war continued, we should not only have suffered still more, but made a peace much worse at the end. Lord Shelburne's motives may not have been laudable; his management of the treaty injudicious and rash; still I prefer the peace, such as it is, to continuation of the war. I believe I differ from some of my best friends, but I must be governed by my own feelings, and must speak the truth.

Your nephew tells me he intends to make you a visit next month: he makes no more of a journey to Florence than of going to York races; and therefore I am glad you will not only have the comfort of seeing him, but of hearing a thousand things expounded that cannot be detailed in a letter. The new system will probably be adjusted by that time. I shall desire him to carry you the detail of General Murray's trial, which I myself shall never read. It was an incident that made no impression here. This great city is wonderfully curious, though exceedingly indifferent. The latter complexion occasions the former. Everybody wants to hear something new every day, no matter whether good or bad. They forget it next day, and enquire again for news. At this moment every man's mouth and ear is open to learn the new Administration—none can tell yet; still, dispositions of places are invented and circulated: yet, excepting interested politicians, nobody really cares who is to go in or out; and, when the change is completed, it will be forgotten in a week. This was exactly the case in March and in June last. Our levity is unlike that of the French: they turn everything into a jest, an epigram, or a ballad; we are not pleasant, but violent, and

[1] When he negotiated with the king without concert with Lord Rockingham.—WALPOLE.

yet remember nothing for a moment. This was not our character formerly. Perhaps the prostitution of patriotism, and the daily and indiscriminate publications of abuse on all the world, have, the former made virtue suspected, and the latter made discredit so general, that virtue is either not believed, or has no authority. Can the people be much attached to any man, if they think well of none? Can they hate any man superlatively, if they think ill of all? In my own opinion, we have no positive character at present at all. We are not so bad as most great nations have been when sinking. We have no excessive vices, no raging animosities. A most absurd and most disgraceful civil war produced no commotions. A peace, far from glorious, to be sure, and condemned, pleases many, seriously provokes very few. It will sink into silent contempt, as soon as the new Ministers are appointed. The peace of Paris, more ignominious as the termination of a most triumphant war, was scarce mentioned after the preliminaries had been approved in Parliament. If you find these features resembling those of former England, then I am wrong to think our national character altered.

There has been a deep snow, which has prevented my going out, or having seen anybody to-day; so, if there is anything new, I hope your nephew will write it. Adieu!

2228. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

March 10, 1783.

I BEGAN a letter to you yesterday sevennight, intending to send it away the next day: so I did on Friday, by which time I concluded a new Administration would be settled. That is not just the case yet; and therefore I have laid aside my commenced letter (which, however, you may get some time or other), and begin another—just to stay your stomach till I can tell you something positive. To-day I shall not utter a word of politics, as they might be addled by to-morrow.

My old aunt, and your old acquaintance, Lady Walpole, died yesterday morning at past eighty-seven.[1] She has been quite blind for some years; but so well, that, having a fever last year of which she recovered, she said it was the first money she had ever laid out with an apothecary for herself. I sat an hour with her three weeks ago, and never saw her look better, nor possess her senses more.

[1] See vol. i. p. cliv.—CUNNINGHAM.

Another person you once knew died at the same time in a more dismal way—*à l'Anglaise*. Mr. Skrine shot himself; they say, from distressed circumstances.

Tuesday, 11*th*.

My vow of not uttering a word of politics being confined in the literal sense to yesterday, I shall open my pen's mouth again so far as to tell you that the Interministerium still exists, as far as Nonentity is a Being. Do not imagine that we feel any inconvenience from the Administration wanting a Head. Everything goes on more quietly for that defect. The Parliament sits—business is done without obstruction, for nobody can be opposed when there is nobody to be opposed; the inference I doubt, is, that a minister is opposed, not for what he *does*, but for what he *is*. In the fable of Æsop, the Head and Members were starved out when they would not feed the Belly: here we now find, that, if the Belly and *Members* are well crammed, they can jog on mighty comfortably without the Head.

The newspapers will tell you, that tenders of the first place have been made to various persons, who have declined it, and that a veto has been put on the only person who is ready to accept.[1] These reports I neither affirm nor deny; for I know nothing but town-talk. You would naturally ask me, "But what do you believe?" I reply, "Nothing!" When people are quite ignorant of what is doing, instead of confessing their ignorance, they coin knowledge and invent something that others at least may believe. Thus I have been told positively for this last fortnight of so many Premiers being appointed, that at last I have determined to disbelieve anything I hear, but to believe nothing. In that suspense I leave you for the present. Excepting a million of lies, you know as much as the whole town of London does; and, if there are half-a-dozen of truths amid that inundation of falsehoods, my spectacles are not good enough to discriminate the precious stones from the counterfeits; and, as I am too old to wear jewels, it is pretty indifferent to me which are diamonds, and which Bristol-stones. I only take care not to send you bits of glass. Adieu!

[1] The Duke of Portland. This long suspense was occasioned by the king's unwillingness to take the Duke of Portland and the old Whigs for ministers.—Walpole.

2229. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Sunday, March 2, 1783.

[This is the letter mentioned in the preceding to have been begun, but it was not sent away till March 18th.]

It is not quite new in this country, though not so frequent as in your neighbourhood, to see a *sede vacante:* here, I call it an Interministerium. There is this difference between the two vacuums; at Rome, the pretence is, that the Holy Ghost does not know its own mind till the *majority* fixes it. Here, the *majority* has decided; but inspiration has not yet given the fiat. As even what passes within the Conclave is known, or guessed, or reported falsely; so here people pretend to account for the present hiatus in government. I do not warrant what I am going to tell you; only send you the creed of the day.

Lord Shelburne resigned the Treasury last Monday, and the Duke of Portland was ready to take his place; being named thereto by the united factions of the Cardinals, Fox and North. The Holy Ghost is said to be highly displeased with that junction; and, instead of imposition of hands on the elect, offered the ministerial tiara to the juvenile Cardinal, William Pitt; who, after pondering in his heart so effulgent a Call, and not finding his vocation ratified by a majority of the Sacred College, humbly declined the splendid nomination on Thursday last. Clouds and darkness have hung over the last two days. Here I pause till the sky clears: at present, I know no more than the Pope of Rome what is doing.

Wednesday night, 5th.

This letter, which was to have speeded to you last night, could not get its complement, the political atmosphere being still overcast. Cardinal North was summoned to the Vatican on Monday, where much entreaty was used to detach him from his new confederation, but in vain; and he was dismissed with a declaration, that any terms should be granted, except the disbursement of St. Peter's pence by the head of an heretical faction. The Cardinal had another short audience last night, with as little effect. This morning, it is said, the young Cardinal [Mr. Pitt] I mentioned, and two others, have been closeted; and there ends the second part of this interlude, as far as I know. If things remain in suspense till

Friday night, I shall still withhold this: you had better remain in negative than in positive uncertainty, unless your nephew gives you any hint. For my part, I do not choose, at such a crisis, to divulge our bickerings, though they can be no secret.

March 13*th.*

I began this letter, as you perceive, a fortnight ago; but we have remained in such confusion till yesterday, that truly I did not care to give you an account that might delight foreigners, and would give you an anxiety that I could neither remove, nor cared to explain. I shall now send you a few lines to-morrow, that will make you easy by announcing a settlement; but, as your nephew will set out for Florence next week, I will commit this to him; which will give you a fuller explanation, though it will be longer before you receive it.

In short, whether Lord Shelburne retained his influence in the Closet, or endeavoured to preserve it; or whether mere aversion to Charles Fox and the Cavendishes, who govern the remnant of the Rockingham faction, was the cause; Lord Shelburne, the Chancellor, the Lord Advocate, and some of the old Bedford squadron, seconded the King's wishes to patch up a succedaneous Administration, though without Lord Shelburne for ostensible Minister. The first idea was to offer the Treasury to young Pitt, whose vanity was at first naturally staggered; but his discretion got the better, and he declined. It was then offered to Lord Gower, who had not resolution enough to accept. At last, Lord North, as I told you, was sent for, and it was proposed to him earnestly to resume his old rudder; but he avowed his new alliance with Fox, and proposed the Duke of Portland. This was absolutely rejected; and a resolution was declared of not appointing the Duke premier, though all the rest of his party might have places. This strange interval lasted from Sunday night to the Tuesday sevennight following. All men were in amazement, and nobody knew how this Gordian knot would be cut. I believe it was expected, perhaps hoped, that Mr. Fox and his associates would fly out into violence; which would revolt a very fluctuating House of Commons, in which the Tories, though they had followed Lord North, their old commander, against Lord Shelburne, might repent their desertion of prerogative, and leave the new allies, North and Fox, once more in a minority: but *these* were too cunning to precipitate their plan, and kept their temper; while the Crown received so many rebuffs, and found it impossible to form

any other Ministry, that at last Lord North was again sent for, and ordered to form a new arrangement according to the system he had adopted and proposed; but was desired to make it broad enough, that there might not be another change soon.[1] Whether the latter part of the command will be easily executed, I don't know. The Coalition of North and Fox has given extreme offence reciprocally to many of their friends, and I believe is not very popular in the country; nay, I question whether they are very sure of either House of Parliament. Of the Court they cannot be, which has shown so much aversion; and, as in March last, has affronted the Duke of Portland, like Lord Rockingham, by appointing another person to treat with him. Many expect the two Allies will break again—I own I do not believe that: but as few, by the reduction of employments, and by the fulness of other places, whence the present occupiers will be removed, can be provided for, I foresee a pretty strong Opposition; and young Pitt, whose character is as yet little singed, and who has many youths, of his own age and of parts, attached to him, will be ready to head a new party. There are many other circumstances, too long to detail, that will favour my ideas. Your nephew will supply a verbal comment; but pray remember to send me *this letter*, and the rest of mine, by him.

The peace and the new arrangement are certainly fortunate. A duration of obstinacy against the latter might have endangered the former. Our situation, however, is far from admirable; and fallen we are very low in every respect—nay, have no symptoms of a nation returning to its senses, and thinking of repairing its errors and recovering its consideration. Mr. Fox, I am persuaded, had he full authority, is most capable of undertaking such a task; as, of all men living, Lord Shelburne has shown himself the most insufficient. Every day of his Administration produced new proofs of his folly, duplicity, indiscretion, contradictions, and disregard of all principles. He was fallen into the lowest contempt, even before his power was shaken. He will have full time to reflect on his errors; and yet hitherto he has seemed insensible of them, and incapable of correcting them. The Duke of Portland is a cypher. Lord North has lately shown himself a dexterous politician for his own interests, though a most fatal Minister to us, and uncreditable to himself, and not very grateful to his Master. Still, such was our blindness, he

[1] This was certainly an insincerity to lull the Allies asleep, as appeared nine months afterwards; and, even so early as the following August, the King dropped hints of his meditating another change.—WALPOLE.

was the most popular man in England, even after his fall; but that vision is dispelled, and he will be seen hereafter in his true colours, as a bad minister and a selfish man, who had abilities enough to have made a very different figure. Adieu!

March 18*th.*

P.S. I have been telling you what may be true; but at least it is not so yet. The Administration that was thought settled, is not. The Duke of Portland was invited, and refused in the same breath; that is, was ordered to send his list *in writing*, and would not: and, lest any part should be in the right, he and his new friend Lord North are not agreed on their list; and yet they and their Sovereign have squabbled about part of that unsettled list. He has insisted on keeping the Chancellor, they on dismissing him. Why? oh! thereby hangs a tale, more serious than all the rest. George the *Fourth*[1] has linked himself with Charles Fox. The Chancellor was consulted (by the King), and is said to have expressed himself in terms that would be treason, if the present tense were the future;[2] but, that I may not be in the same præmunire, I leave to your nephew to expound the rest by word of mouth. I expect him every minute to receive my packet. This letter, I hope, and he, will give you a clue that may make you understand my future despatches, which will be circumspect, not so much against home inspection as foreign. We are in such a distracted state, and may continue so, that I shall avoid touching on our confusions more than shall be too notorious to be concealed. As to who are or shall be Ministers, I care very little. All parties are confounded and intermixed, without being reconciled. My belief is, that new distractions will arise, and, after some scene of anarchy, a new era. You may depend upon it, that I shall have nothing to do with it; and consequently shall know nothing but outlines. I withdraw myself more and more from the world, have few connections left, and despise supremely such old simpletons as thrust themselves amongst generations two or three degrees younger. If one outlives one's contemporaries, it is no reason for supposing one shall cut a new set of teeth.

[1] The Prince of Wales. His connection with Charles Fox made the king detest the latter, and was the principal cause of his dislike to the proposed administration.—WALPOLE.

[2] That is, if the Prince were King.—WALPOLE.

2230. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

March 11, 1783.

I HOPE, Madam, you have been rejoiced at the appointment of every new Prime Minister that we have had for this last fortnight—Mr. W. Pitt, the Duke of Portland, Lord Temple, Lord Gower, and Lord Thurlow. There may have been more for aught I know; as it is no business of mine, and as Lord Ossory is in town, I left it to him to make the several notifications; and it is well I did, or I might have distracted you, as I should perhaps have sent you one administration and he another by the same post. At present there is no premier at all, at least there was not a quarter of an hour ago; nay, they say there never is to be another; and, as I am the only unadulterated Whig left in England, I am prodigiously glad of it. You cannot imagine how much better things go on. Seconds, and thirds, and fourths execute all business without molestation; for, as every man thinks himself fit to be first, nobody condescends to oppose seconds and thirds: and as seconds and thirds never presume to do more than their duty, nobody has any fault to find; and no mortal ever finds fault without cause. The only present grievance is, the want of Levees and Drawing-rooms. All the world is eager to pay court to their Sovereign on the abolition of the odious office of Prime Minister; but as all the world have thronged to offer their compliments on the accession of every new Premier, their present contradictory homage is justly disdained; and, as we can go on without a First Lord of the Treasury, we certainly might exist without Levees or Drawing-rooms—why do people go to them, but because they hope to be rewarded by a First Lord of the *Treasury?* In the East, where all are excellent subjects, they scarce ever see their monarch, except at the mosque or at an oratorio. In short, whether Whig or High-churchman, one must be pleased with the present dispensation; I am only afraid that, such is our levity, we shall grow tired of this mundane theocracy when the novelty is over; and, like the frogs, neither be content with the log, nor the stork, nor the stagnant pool.

I am grown prodigiously older within these two days, Madam. I have been for some time the patriarch of a long line of nephews and nieces, and of great nephews and nieces; yet still, when I had a mind to give myself juvenile airs, I could say, "I have been to see my aunt."

Alas! that consolation is gone! The old Lady Walpole died on Sunday at eighty-seven. Did I ever tell your Ladyship a trait of her, that was very respectable? She was daughter of a French *refugee* stay-maker.[1] When ambassadress, the late Queen of France was surprised at her speaking French so well, and asked her how it happened. She replied, "*Madame, c'est ce que je suis Françoise.*"—"*Vous!*" said the Queen, "*et de quelle famille?*"—"*D'aucune, Madame,*" replied my aunt. Would not one rather have made that answer than have been able to say, a Montmorenci? The French ambassadress here at the same time, who was the tally of my aunt too, in birth, and in quickness of reply, though not of such sublime modesty, was an heiress also of very low extraction. The Maréchal de Broglie, her husband, talking of his children, and to what professions he destined them, said, "*Et pour le cadet, je l'aurois fait Chevalier de Malte; mais madame,*" pointing to his wife, "*nous a fermé toutes les portes.*" She replied, "*Oui, jusqu'à celles de l'hôpital.*" *Apropos* of *bon-mots*, has our Lord told you that George Selwyn calls Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt "The idle and the industrious apprentices?" If he has not, I am sure you will thank me, Madam.

Oh! stay; there is a Prime Minister just made—not indeed at the head of the Treasury, nor one that has either salary or perquisites, but who consequently would be much more in earnest in declining the honour, if he dared: in short, alas! your Ladyship's gazetteer is grown such a favourite at a certain tiny Court in Cavendish-square,[2] that he is called to sit at the board three nights in a week I really think that I should *accept*, if I was sent for to the Queen's House, if only to recover my liberty, as Lord North[3] set a precedent of being as idle as one pleases.

2231. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

March 13, 1783, *New Style.*

I conclude, in the language of the day, that our Lord has been *sent for*, and that I shall tell your Ladyship very stale news when I acquaint you that the Duke of Portland is Minister. I should

[1] See vol. i. p. cliv, and the story itself told previously in a letter to Mann of 20th Sept. 1772, vol. v. p. 413.—Cunningham.

[2] Princess Amelia's.—Cunningham.

[3] Lord North had just been turned out of office.—Cunningham.

tell you more than I know if I added another promotion, for, though I heard that last night, it is now past four in the afternoon, and, simple as I sit here, I have not learnt, nay, not inquired a syllable more, nor have seen a two-legged creature to-day but a crooked painter. Perhaps there is not another gentleman or gentlewoman in London equally ignorant. Nay, as I go again to *my* Court this evening, where we have not the best intelligence in the world, it may be to-morrow morning before I know whether the old Duchess of Portland or Lord Guilford is to be Queen-Dowager—the most important point to *me*, as they are my play-fellows. I sat with the former candidate till past eleven last night at Mrs. Delany's, and had a mind to ask for Margaret my housekeeper to be necessary woman instead of Jenkinson, with a pension of only a thousand a year, which, according to Colonel Barré's way of calculating, she might have had, if my father had continued Prime Minister to this time.

I think your Ladyship may now steal into Grosvenor-place, without hearing *odd man* called over the way. As soon as all the *sorties* and *entrées* have been made, and the several parties have visited reciprocally, things will fall into their usual channel, and the nearest relations will not hate one another more than usual. Nay, "*amidst the changes and chances* of this mortal life" (a phrase which one should think had been coined at Brooks's), the reverse of an old proverb has just taken date. *The dearest friends must part* was an obvious and trite old saying; *the bitterest foes may embrace* is newer, and not so triste a reflection: I love gay and good-humoured maxims. If the refinements of society have corrupted the heart, they have, at least, improved the temper. There are no deadly feuds now. People love and hate one another so often, that they go into friendship or out, as easily as into or out of mourning; and, within this twelvemonth, for almost as short a time. Pray, Madam, don't be so vulgar as to stay in the country, because there is somebody or other here that you are afraid of meeting. What an old-fashioned prejudice! Does one like anybody the less, because one dislikes that person? There is not a monarch in Europe that cannot conquer his aversion in *seventeen days;* and shall a subject be allowed greater latitude? I know your Ladyship's are not antipathies, but very contrary awkwardnesses; but you must get over them. Lions and lambs, doves and serpents, now trot in the same harness, and it does one's heart good to see them. They will all go into the ark together on Monday, the sun will shine, and

some evanescent rainbow will promise that the Ministry shall never be drowned again.

Here ends the first chapter of Exodus, which, in Court Bibles, always precedes Genesis.

2232. TO H. R. H. THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.[1]

Thursday, March 13th, 1783.

Your Royal Highness may be surprised, Madam, that after announcing the fall of Lord Shelburne, I should not have told you who was his successor. I had more reasons than one, like the Mayor of Orleans; though that one were sufficient, viz., his having no successor till yesterday. I knew Lord Cholmondeley had written to the Duke; and in truth I did not care to tell foreign Post-offices, though no secret, the confusion we were in. I had rather anybody should publish our disgraces than I. Nay, I should perhaps have sent false news, for several appointments of Premiers were believed, each for a day, and proved false the next. The post was certainly offered to and declined by young Mr. Pitt, to Lord North, Lord Gower, and, it was said, to Lord Thurlow. At last, after a vacancy of seventeen days, Lord North was summoned yesterday, and ordered to make his proposed arrangement; in consequence of which the Duke of Portland was sent for next, and is First Lord of the Treasury. I have not yet heard the other changes or dispositions, but suppose we shall know the principal before this shall set out to-morrow.

There have been cart-loads of abuse, satiric prints, and some little humour on the coalition of Lord North and Mr. Fox; nor has Lord Shelburne been spared before or since his exit. It is remarkable that the counties and towns are addressing thanks for the peace, which their representatives have condemned. George Selwyn has been happiest, as usual, in his *bons-mots*. He calls Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt the Idle and Industrious Apprentices. It is a coarser and much poorer piece of wit, I don't know whose, that the Duke of Portland is a fit *block* to hang *Whigs* on. You have seen in the papers, Madam, the new peerages and pensions, and therefore I do not mention them. I very likely repeat what you hear from your daughters and others, but what can I tell but what everybody knows?

[1] Endorsed, but not finished or sent.—Cunningham.

My aunt Lady Walpole is dead, and they say has left but little, and that little to her two daughters. Mr. Skrine has shot himself, it is supposed, from excruciating illnesses. Old Lady Jerningham is recovering from a most violent palsy. General Conway has had as violent a St. Antony's fire, but is well again. I will reserve the rest of my paper for new promotions.

I never deal in scandal, Madam, but one may make use of it as an antidote to itself. You must have seen in the papers much gross abuse on a pretty ingenious friend of mine for a low amour with one of her own servants, for which I seriously believe there was not the smallest foundation. The charge is now removed to much higher quarters, which, at least, are more creditable. The town has for these ten days affirmed that the Lord husband was going to cite into the *Spiritual* Court the head of the *Temporal* one—nay, and the third chief of the Common Law—nay, and the second of the Spiritual one too. Such conquests would be very honourable in the records of Love, and the first very diverting, as the hero has so much distinguished himself by severity on Bills of divorce. I do not warrant any of these stories, but totally discredit that of the domestic. A prude may begin with a footman, and a gallant woman may end with one, but a pretty woman who has so many slaves in high life, does not think of a livery, especially where vanity is the principal ingredient in her composition.

2233. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 13, 1783

I DO not know whether this letter will not be still shorter than my last; but your nephew sets out next week, and will give you full details of the interlude, for it is now finished. Lord North received command yesterday to form a new Administration according to his own proposal, of which he is *not* to be the chief but the Duke of Portland. I have not yet heard the other arrangements, for the interministerium, which had lasted seventeen days, ceased but yesterday morning, and was not divulged till the evening.

We shall now, I hope, have a settlement for some time—I mean, it is necessary to the country. To me revolutions are but a scene that passes like so many others to which I have been witness, and in which I am concerned but as one of the people. I do not forget how soon I am to leave the theatre, even as a spectator. I rejoice


Mary Lady Jerningham
1782

in the peace as a happy denouement of one tragedy. What is to follow, I trust, will only be a comedy (like those of other pacific periods), as politics are in my eyes, when not bloodied by war.

Friday, 14*th*.

I believe I shall not be able to send you the new litany to-night: it had not received the imprimatur yesterday, as there must be two responses to adjust, for those who are to be dismissed, *From our enemies defend us, O Lord!* and for the candidates who are to succeed them, *We beseech Thee to hear us*. The town, who never takes so much time to deliberate, disposed the whole arrangement in a moment, though every editor gave different readings. I shall give you neither the one nor the other, as most may be apocryphal, but wait for the genuine edition in usum Delphini.

We have received the dreadful accounts of the devastation of Messina, &c.: I say no more, for I could only detail the common-place reflections that present themselves on such calamities.

2234. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

March 16, 1783.

When Lord Ossory is in town, Madam, I shall certainly not pretend to send you politics; no, not even abortions of them. At any time, I know none but what I learn by sitting here behind the bar of my own coffee-house. Indeed, I only write now to say that you extended the ideas of my last farther than I meant; I only alluded to a house very near me,[1] whither I thought it might be awkward to you to go just at this turn of the tide. I shall say nothing more on any such subject. You ought to and must judge by your own feelings.

I do not well recollect how I applied *Exodus before Genesis* in my last, and believe it was too far fetched, as it appeared an enigma. I think it was used on the change of the Ministry, and that I referred to the derivation of the two words, which are Greek. *Exodus* signifies *a going out*, and *Genesis a generation*. Now a new Ministry cannot be born till the old one is gone out; and, therefore, in the Red Book or Court Bible, Exodus must precede Genesis. I find that *much learning had made Paul mad*, and that I talked nonsense by talking Greek. I will not be so apostolic again when I am speaking on heathen topics.

[1] Lansdowne House.—R. Vernon Smith.

As I have not much faith, Madam, in sentiments after matrimony, I suspect that your Bedfordshire husband, who would not go to see Mrs. Siddons without his wife, is a hypocrite, and meant to persuade her that he never saw any woman *in Drury Lane* without her being present.

I don't know whether I ought to afflict your Ladyship with the dreadful account I received last night from Sir Horace Mann of the devastation of Sicily and Calabria, nor where you will find horror enough adequate to the calamity! What do you think of one hundred and thirty-two cities, towns, and castles totally destroyed? This is literally sweeping

Towns to the grave, and nations to the deep.

There are vanished besides two islands and a whole river! One Calabrian Prince has lost seventeen manors! Mr. Swinburne is become an antediluvian historian. *Nunc seges est ubi Troja fuit!* How diminutive does a change of Ministry appear, when nature overturns two countries in a couple of nights!

2235. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Thursday, April 3, 1783.

I MARK the very day of the week on which I begin my letter, because of late nothing has proved true; at least, not lasting for four-and-twenty hours. For these three weeks I have said to everybody that called on me and told me news, "I beg your pardon, but I will not believe anything you tell me: all I can do is to disbelieve." Well! at last there is an Administration—it *has* kissed hands; and therefore, were it to be destroyed to-morrow, it will have been. In a word, Lord North was sent for once more on Tuesday night, and was ordered to tell the Duke of Portland, that his Grace's arrangement would be accepted. Accordingly, the new Cabinet kissed hands yesterday: the Duke of Portland, as First Lord of the Treasury; Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Stormont, President of the Council; Lord North and Mr. Fox, Secretaries of State; Lord Carlisle, Privy Seal; Lord Keppel, First Lord of the Admiralty. This is all I know yet: for reports, even crediting, I should not repeat them till they have taken *seisin;* as on a change of Administration, places, like insects, undergo a variety of transformations, at least in the eyes of Rumour before the meta-

morphoses are completed. As my letter will not leave London till to-morrow, I may be able to tell you more. I sent you a key by your nephew, which will unlock much of what is past.

In the mean time let us talk of Cavalier Mozzi. I have received your letter, with his enclosed to Mr. Duane; which I sent immediately, and have seen the latter this morning. He is to appoint Mr. Sharpe and Lucas to meet him here, if they can, on Monday or Tuesday next; and when we have heard all they have to say, Mr. Duane and I shall talk it over together, and, I hope, give a more favourable decision than Cavalier Mozzi is willing to submit to Since Mozzi has so long delayed coming, I see no occasion for it now. Indeed, the walls of Florence seem impassable, or your principie'd Earl [1] would not have been riveted there so long. How strange he is! neither parent nor children can draw him from that specific spot! But we are a lunatic nation!

They tell us that the Sicilian and Neapolitan tragedy has not been so very dreadful as at first represented. I hope my friend, the Professor of Earthquakes, Sir William Hamilton, will give a full account of it, and not treat it with your Pope's indifference.

Mr. Fox is again *your* principal, and a very agreeable one he will be: there is no walk in which *he* will not shine.

Friday, 4th.

The Duke of Richmond resigned yesterday. Of new preferments to-day produced but the following: Burke, Paymaster; Spanish Charles Townshend, Treasurer of the Navy; Eden, Vice-Treasurer of Ireland; Lord Surrey, Frederick Montagu, and Sir Grey Cooper, Lords of the Treasury; and John Townshend, of the Admiralty. These are nothing to you, but your nephew will like to know. I tell you none of the Who-are-to-be's, to save myself the trouble of contradiction, if I should misinform you.

I believe some of your earthquake weather has reached hither; for it has been so warm for these five days, that, on opening my window to the Square this morning, I found a large wasp on the outside, which soon flew away. Adieu!

[1] Earl Cowper [third Earl, died 1789], made Prince Nassau by the Emperor. He had lately sent his children to England to be educated, yet did not follow them himself.—Walpole. See vol. vii., p. 39, and p. 272.—Cunningham.

2236. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, April 5, 1783.

You know I do not wait for answers, Madam, when I have anything worth telling you. In truth I go so very little into the world, that unless I hear news in my own room, I know but a small part of what is passing. Of late I have been quite tired of rumours and false reports; nor could give accounts of an egg that might be hatched or addled the next hour; and which, though set under a brood hen, I could not tell but might produce a goose or a guinea fowl. Besides, Lord Ossory could give you much quicker intelligence than I, and more authentic: nor at this moment can I specify the preferments but of those who have actually kissed hands. Yet of one thing I am sure, which is, that General Conway is delighted with Mr. Fitzpatrick's being Secretary at War, and will do everything he can to accommodate him.

I hope you were not alarmed at the attempt on your house. I do expect that we shall neither be safe at home nor abroad. Everything proves that man is an aurivorous animal, and will have its food wherever it grows.

I heard and saw the Misses Fitzpatrick t'other night, and they assured me your Ladyship will be in town at the end of this month. I own, as you have stayed so long, I doubt it, but shall be happy to be mistaken.

The weather is so delicious, that I propose going to Strawberry next week for some days, and unless it changes to cold, to be chiefly there. I grow so antiquated and superannuated, that I am fit for nothing but to be laid up in my own Gothic collection. My politics ended with the American war; I shall tap none more. The greatest folly in my eyes is that of old people who cling to the last plank, when they may be washed off by the next wave.

2237. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, April 17, 1783.

I am a little of your Ladyship's opinion, that the new Administration is not founded upon a rock; however, if they fall, I see no reason for expecting any other to be more permanent. The cards have been so thoroughly shuffled, that it will require several deals before they get into suits again.

I know nothing, Madam, that will make a paragraph. I have been for three days at Strawberry, which does not brighten my intelligence; but you are coming yourself, and I believe will not find that I am particularly ignorant. All I have heard, except politics, of which I am tired, is, that Lady Frances Scott is to be married to Mr. Douglas, the Douglas.[1] She was a great friend of Lady Lucy, and it is a proof of *his* sense, that he can forgive her person in favour of her merit.

In a dearth of English novelties, perhaps, Madam, you may be willing to learn the latest mode at Paris. It is, to speak broken French—not to ridicule Britons, but in lowly imitation of us. I conclude the Duke of Manchester will be elected into the French Academy on the recommendation of his barbarisms. Well, it is consolatory in our fall to be still admired and aped! The Duc de Chartres is coming to study us, as Pythagoras and Solon travelled to Egypt, and I hope will carry back every monkey-worship that he finds established on the banks of the Thames. Oh! I fib; Lord Mount-Edgecumbe has just been here, and says, the King of France, He in France, will not allow the Duc de Chartres to come hither, as the Count d'Artois has the same ambition of improving himself, and no King can like to be outshone by all the younger branches of his family. I am sorry Lady Anne will not see those two Rajahpouts driving themselves in gigs to Ranelagh.

2238. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, April 25, 1783.

Unless you have a mind to be Bishop of Norwich, Madam, I can give you no reason for hastening your arrival before Monday—not that I should fling cold water on your coming sooner were I to be in town myself; but I shall go to Strawberry to-morrow—though the weather is as bitter as it always is in Newmarket week—and not return but for my Princess's Monday; and consequently shall not have the honour of kissing your Ladyship's hand till Tuesday.

It is not I, but young Mr. Horatio, who has kissed hands for a place in Chelsea College; for though *I* am much fitter for a hospital, it is not my intention to go to one through Court. Another of my kin has arrived, Mr. Robert Walpole, from Portugal, and has

[1] The Douglas, the successful claimant in the great Douglas and Hamilton cause. Lady Lucy was his former wife. She was daughter of the second Duke of Montrose, and died in 1780.—Cunningham.

brought a wife, who is to efface all Venuses and Helens past or present. I have not yet seen her, but mean to do so soon, lest she should be poisoned by some of the reigning beauties who have views on the Prince of Wales.

I have just heard that Lord Hardwicke is dead. I am not sure it is true, yet it is probable. Soame Jenyns, whom I saw last night at Mrs. Delany's, said he was very ill and kept his bed. They were talking of the new Administration; Jenyns said he hoped it would last at least as long as it had been in forming. In truth, I question whether it will be very vivacious. If satirical prints could despatch them, they would be dead in their cradle; there are enough to hang a room. The last I think the best; it is called, "Heads of a new *Wig* Administration on a broad bottom." It is better composed than ordinary, and has several circumstances well imagined. The designer is one Sayer, a Norfolk lawyer, who drew the single figures of several members of Parliament. The woman who keeps the print-shop in Bruton-street, whence these hieroglyphics issue, says she has engraved all the drawings that are sent to her, and that she gets by them, one with another, ten pounds a-piece. I hope you were charmed, Madam, by the figure of the young maiden, in Mr. Bunbury's 'Robin Gray.'

I rejoice that our correspondence ends here, for this season, Madam. How glad I shall be on Tuesday, to say, "Go to Grosvenor Place!"

2239. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, April 30, 1783.

I FEAR poor Cavalier Mozzi will not find himself much advanced, though Mr. Duane and I have made a beginning. He might as well have a suit in Chancery, if we go no faster than we have done. We sat the first morning near four hours, and then could proceed no further, for a point of law being started, upon which it was necessary to take the opinion of counsel; which Sharpe took down to state to two of the first lawyers. All our three said we should obtain that *opinion immediately;* and *immediately* has already lasted above three weeks, and I have not heard a word from my fellow-labourers.

Between Easter and Newmarket, politics have been a little at a stand: there had been vivacities in both Houses, but no division in either. The heat of the war seems likely to lie in that of the Lords. The newspapers specify the preferments: the one most difficult to

be filled, the Viceroyalty of Ireland, is at last supplied by Lord Northington. Mr. Windham, whom you saw lately in Italy, is his Secretary. Mr. Trevor, second son of Lord Hampden, who has been employed in Germany, is to be your neighbour at Turin. There seems to be a little suspense in Lord Mountstuart's destination to Madrid. The French Ambassador, D'Adhemar, is expected incessantly, for the Duke of Manchester is gone to Paris. It is well these articles are connected with your vocation, or they would not be worth noting: but I have nothing more material to tell you. After a war, and so many changes of Administrations, it might be natural to repose a little; but perhaps we may not be arrived at a settlement yet.[1]

When you wrote last, your nephew was not arrived at Florence; but I conclude he was before your letter had made ten posts; for he travels as fast as your own couriers. I shall grudge your having him for one particular day in next week; when Mr. Pitt is to move for the alteration of the Representation, against which your nephew is as zealous as I am. It will probably not be carried; but I wish it knocked on the head by as many blows as possible. Our Constitution has resisted all kinds of shocks; but, if it changes itself, who can foresee the consequence? We have lost our grandeur! I hope our felicity is not to follow it! It is a disinterested wish, as most of mine are; for the progress of revolutions to come will scarcely enter into the volume in which I am concerned.

The newspapers intimate that you were in the right, when you judged that the two ambitious Imperials[2] were determined to treat the Turkish empire as they did Poland, and share it between them: it seems, no submissions have diverted them from their purpose; on the contrary, I suppose, have encouraged them. Formerly an Emperor and Empress, with no more religion than these two, would have christened it a holy war; modern rapine is more barefaced. Our Nabobs do not plunder the Indies under the banners of piety like the old Spaniards and Portuguese. I call man an *aurivorous* animal. We pretend just now to condemn our own excesses, which are shocking indeed; *sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* A Parliament is a fine court of correction. The Lord Advocate of Scotland,[3] who

[1] This proved a prophecy: the new Administration did not last above nine months. —WALPOLE.

[2] Austria and Russia.—WALPOLE.

[3] Henry Dundas, Esq., who, on the coalition between Mr. Fox and Lord North, had gone over to the side of Pitt.—WALPOLE.

has sold himself over and over, is prosecuting Sir Thomas Rumbold for corruption at Madras! This Rumbold was a waiter at White's. there are two or three of like origin, who have returned from Bengal incrusted with gold and diamonds. This trial has disclosed a scene of tyranny in the East India Company itself as royally iniquitous as could issue from the Council-chamber of Petersburg. We talk and write of liberty, and plunder the property of the Indies. The Emperor destroys convents, and humbles the Pope; the Czarina preaches toleration, but protects the Jesuits; and these two philosophic sovereigns intend to divide Constantinople, after sacrificing half a million of lives! In one age, religion commits massacres; in another, philosophy. Oh! what a farce are human affairs!

2240. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, May 7, 1783.

If I could tell you *what a man might write about in these chaotic days,* I should have written to you oftener myself, but the Chaos that began about this time twelvemonth disgusted me so much, as it defeated all the prospects which I had hoped though never expected to see realised, that I firmly determined to bid adieu to politics; and as nothing else worth repeating does happen, I imitated your indolence, and consequently was kind to your conscience, which must now and then reproach itself with its remissness. I did, indeed, a few days ago, begin a letter to you, but as I perceived it was almost all about myself, I left it unfinished at Strawberry, and now on the encouragement of your letter, I shall send you this instead of it, and never finish that. Nay, another of your questions which I can answer gives me occasion to repeat the only thing in that letter which was worth your knowing.

Yes, I have told you that Barry has apotheosised you[1]—ay, and in full chorus with your beatified friends, Dr. Johnson, Soame Jenyns, Burke, and Mrs. Montagu, and with some who may be your friends too, but whose names I never heard before, nor remember now. There are two gentlewomen too, who I believe will stare as much as you at the company in which they find themselves. Had they been hurried into Charon's hoy at once, they could not be more surprised at the higglede-piggledyhood that they would meet there. In short, these two poor gentlewomen are the Duchesses of Devonshire and Rutland,

[1] In his Adelphi pictures.—Cunningham.

who this new master of the ceremonies to Queen Fame has ordered that well-bred usher to the Graces, Dr. Johnson, to present to Mrs. Vicequeen Montagu, under whose tuition they are to be placed, who is recommended to them as a model to copy. This vision of immortality I have not yet seen, but I am dabbing my eyes with euphrasy and rue, and propose to treat them with it to-morrow. I must astringe my mouth too with alum, lest I laugh and be put into purgatory again myself, as I was for the same crime when I first saw Barry's Homeric Venus standing stark naked in front, and dragging herself up to heaven by a pyramid of her own red hair.[1] I had never seen nor heard of the man, and unfortunately he stood at my elbow. To punish me for that unwitting crime, he clapped me into his book on painting as an admirer of the Dutch school, which others have blamed me for undervaluing. I suppose he concluded that if I laughed at bombast-frenzy, I must dote on the lowest buffoonery.

I shall be glad to learn from Lord Harcourt or Mr. Stonhewer your future plans or motions, though I probably shall not be much benefited by them. I think you would have told me, if seeing me fell within your design. The less time I have left, the more I wish to pass it with those I love, but fortune must produce that advantage if I receive it. I cannot expect that it should influence others. The summer, when I could best enjoy their company, separates me almost entirely from my friends, and I have not youth or activity enough to follow them; so that in effect the gout or its consequences tyrannises my whole year. But I do not complain; could one arrange one's scheme of life to one's wish, it would be but more painful to part with it; age and its attendant or concomitant deprivations reconcile one to laying down its burden. Long life is doomed to the loss of those we love, their absence therefore appears a light evil in comparison.

If Carter, of whom I have heard nothing, should call on me and I could recommend him, I would willingly. It is not very likely I should have an opportunity. The town is overrun with painters, as much as with disbanded soldiers, sailors, and ministers, and I doubt half of all four classes must be hanged for robbing on the highway, before the rest can get bread, or anybody else eat theirs in quiet. I shall heartily pity three of the denominations—for the fourth, compassion itself cannot make an option between the Hangers and

[1] Compare vol. vi., p. 187.—Cunningham.

Hangees; who can care whether a Ld. Ad. or a Sir F. or T. R. is the culprit or the executioner. Don't wonder I have done with politics, when there has been such crossing over and figuring in, that I defy prejudice itself to hold the scales with a partial hand in favour of any faction.

2241. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Thursday morning, early, May 8, 1783.

I WRITE, though I wrote but last week, and rather to gratify your nephew than you. Mr. William Pitt's motion for reform of the House of Commons was rejected at past two this morning by 293 to 149. I know no particulars yet, but from a hasty account in a newspaper; and to those intelligencers for the circumstances I refer you and him, as I shall not have time to-day probably to relate them after I have heard them, and must go to Strawberry Hill to-morrow morning to receive company, and this must go away to-morrow night.

This great majority will, I hope, at least check such attempts. Indeed, when 293 members dare to pronounce so firmly, it is plain that the spirit of innovation has gained but few counties; five or six at most, supposing Kent and Essex added to the *Quintuple* Alliance. That very epithet proves that the demand is confined to a small number. The object of altering the Representation I think most dangerous. We know pretty well what good or evil the present state of the House of Commons can do: what an enlargement might achieve, no man can tell. Nay, allowing the present construction to be bad, it is clear that on emergencies it will do right. Were the House of Commons now existing the worst that ever was, still it must be acceptable to our Reformers: for which House of Commons, since the Restoration, ever did more than tear two Prime Ministers from the Crown in one year? In short, the constitution of the House of Commons I see in the same light as I do my own constitution. The gout raises inflammations, weakens, cripples; yet it purges itself, and requires no medicines. To quack it would kill me. Besides, it prevents other illnesses and prolongs life. Could I cure the gout, should not I have a fever, a palsy, or an apoplexy?

There has been but one other debate of note lately; and that was in the other House, when Lord Shelburne opposed the loan, and exposed himself egregiously. He moved, that all loans should be

applied to the national debt, which was an Iricism in terms; that is, to lessen a debt by borrowing more. Yet his rhodomontade on himself was still more extravagant. He vaunted his popularity, and said he was adored; yet it is neither more nor less than true, that he was hooted out of the Administration by all mankind. His falsehoods, flatteries, duplicity, insincerity, arrogance, contradictions, neglect of his friends, with all the kindred of all those faults, were the daily topics of contempt and ridicule; and his folly shut his eyes, nor did he perceive — surely, does not yet perceive —that so very rapid a fall must have been owing to his own incapacity.

The King has lost another child, Prince Octavius; a lovely boy, they say, of whom both their Majesties were dotingly fond. When Prince Alfred died, the King said, "I am very sorry for Alfred; but, had it been Octavius, I should have died too."[1]

We have another Prince arrived, the Duc de Chartres, of whom I need say nothing: you have seen him I believe. Nor have I time now for more; only to trouble you with a commission, if you can execute it. I saw the other day a book much to my taste, and which I never saw before. It is called Fatti, or Fasti, Farnesiani, I am not sure which.[2] It is a thin and not large folio, and contains the history of the House of Farnese in prints; taken, I believe, from one of their villas. There is the marriage of Horatio Farnese and the daughter of Henry the Second of France. In short, it is full of portraits and ceremonies of that time, and I should be most glad to have one, if you can procure it; though, as it came out so long ago, it may be scarce, even at Parma or Rome. If it is not—if it is common—I should wish for two copies; yet, do not attempt two, if not quite easily attained. Adieu! I have not a moment more—but I believe there is nothing more worthy telling you.

[1] Prince Octavius, the king's eighth son, was born on the 20th of February, 1779, and died at Kew Palace on the 3rd of May, 1783.—Wright.

[2] It is called "Fatti Farnese," and contains prints from the paintings by the two brothers, Taddeo and Frederico Zucchero, in the Palace of Capralola. Taddeo, the elder, born in 1529, excelled in elegance of design. Frederico, born in 1543, studied under him. A quarrel with some of the distinguished persons about the Papal court lost him the patronage of Gregory XIII., and made it advisable for him to quit Rome. He retired first to France, and afterwards removed to England, where he grew into considerable repute, and painted a portrait of Queen Elizabeth. His friends at length succeeded in restoring him to favour at Rome.—Walpole.

2242. TO GEORGE COLMAN, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, *Strawberry Hill, May* 10, 1783.

FOR *so* you must allow me to call you, after your being so kind as to send me so valuable and agreeable a present as your translation of Horace[1]—I wish compliment had left any term uninvaded, of which sincerity could make use without suspicion. Those would be precisely what I would employ in commending your poem; and, if they proved too simple to content my gratitude, I would be satisfied with an offering to truth, and wait for a nobler opportunity of sacrificing to the warmer virtue. If I have not lost my memory, your translation is the best I have ever seen of that difficult epistle. Your expression is easy and natural, and when requisite, poetic. In short, it has a prime merit, it has the air of an original.

Your hypothesis in your commentary is very ingenious. I do not know whether it is true, which *now* cannot be known; but if the scope of the epistle was, as you suppose, to hint in a delicate and friendly manner to the elder of Piso's sons that he had written a bad tragedy, Horace had certainly executed his plan with great address; and, I think, nobody will be able to show that anything in the poem clashes with your idea. Nay, if he went farther, and meant to disguise his object, by giving his epistle the air of general rules on poetry and tragedy, he achieved both purposes; and while the youth his friend was at once corrected and put to no shame, all other readers were kept in the dark, except you, and diverted to different scents.

Excuse my commenting your comment, but I had no other way of proving that I really approve both your version and criticism than by stating the grounds of my applause. If you have wrested the sense of the original to favour your own hypothesis, I have not been able to discover your art; for I do not perceive where it has been employed. If you have given Horace more meaning than he was intitled to, you have conferred a favour on him, for you have made his whole epistle consistent, a beauty all the spectacles of all his commentators could not find out—but, indeed, *they* proceed on the profound laws of criticism, *you* by the laws of common sense,

[1] His translation of Horace's Epistola ad Pisones de Arte Poeticâ.—WRIGHT.

which, marching on a plain natural path, is very apt to arrive sooner at the goal, than they who travel on the Appian Way; which was a very costly and durable work, but is very uneasy, and at present does not lead to a quarter of the places to which it was originally directed.

I am, Sir, with great regard, &c.

2243. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 11, 1783.

This is only a codicil to my last, and shall not be longer than my testament. I have seen Lord Harcourt; he says you will not come till the Parliament rises. Were you a Member of Parliament I should think you exceedingly in the right: not being so, excuse me, if I do not comprehend your reason; not that I contest it with you, for were I to convince you I should not think myself a jot nearer to persuading you.

My other reason for writing now is to do justice to your St. Peter, who has let you into heaven:—I mean Barry the painter. I have seen his Exhibition, and am much pleased with one of his eight pictures, and that one is one of the two largest, it is the 'Olympic Victors crowned.' The colouring is cold and unanimated, but the figures are finely drawn and graceful, and the whole composition is simple and classic. Indeed he may improve the colouring, as he says in his book that none of the pieces are finished, nor have their full *chiaro scuro:* of the rest, the 'Orpheus' is very bad, he is blind, dancing, and drunk. The 'Grecian Harvest-home,' if not a mere beginning, is poor enough. In the 'Triumph of the Thames,' Dr. Burney is not only swimming in his clothes, but playing on a harpsichord, a new kind of water-music. For Mrs. Montagu and her pupil Duchesses, and her Chamberlain, the Doctor [Johnson], they are hustled into such a mob of heads that you would think them crowding out of Ranelagh, and so unlike they are, that I did not know which was which. Then there are so many Dukes and Duchesses in robes besides, that I turned to Elysium to avoid a Coronation, and there I found ye all in a masquerade, that is, you in your gown and cassock; Charles I. in his Vandyck dress; Homer in rags; Leo X. in his purple; the Black Prince in armour; and Ossian in flesh and blood, for even that nonentity he has sent to heaven, though indeed after obliging him previously to go and be

born in Ireland. I suppose there is some such maxim of the Schoolmen as *Nemo beatificatur qui non nascitur*. There is a superb shoulder and wing of a mountainous Angel that supports all heaven on its back, and a gigantic leg of another that dangles from aloof, and put me in mind of my own Otranto.

Barry has expounded all in a book which does not want sense, though full of passion and self, and vulgarisms and vanity. It is an essay to recommend himself to an establishment. He calls Mortimer superior to Salvator Rosa, though his best merit was being Salvator's imitator; but there is one thought that pleased me extremely. He says that, in his Elysium (which I did not observe, for it is impossible to see a tenth part at one view), he has represented Titian offering his pallet to Raphael.

Jarvis's Window[1] from Sir Joshua's 'Nativity' is glorious. The room being darkened and the sun shining through the transparencies, realises the illumination that is supposed to be diffused from the glory, and has a magic effect.

The Duc de Chartres is arrived. This *amiable Prince* (to talk in the style of the newspapers on like occasions) is, note it, six-and-thirty, is married, and has daughters.

Lady Clermont made a great dinner and assembly for him on Thursday. He came dirty, and in a frock with metal buttons enamelled in black, with hounds and horses, a fashion I remember here above forty years ago. The moral Madame de Genlis was mistress of this old cub and is now Governess to the Princesses, his daughters; you see, we may still learn from France.[2]

[1] At New College, Oxford.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 19, 1783.

My friend Mr. Alderson brings you with this the copies you requested of Gray's head: it is the first opportunity I have had of sending them, and therefore I do not apologise for the delay. He comes up to be a negotiator between poor Lady Holdernesse and her quondam son-in-law [Lord Caermarthen]; who, by taking advantage of a lawyer's blunder in Lord Holdernesse's will, is likely to distress her exceedingly, and I shall not wonder if the house, pictures, &c., in Hertford-street follows Sion Hill: 'tis a sad business, and I pity her extremely. If Mr. Alderson is lucky enough to find you when he brings this to your house, I should be greatly obliged to you if you would permit him to give you a memorandum relating to an application which Lady Holdernesse made to General Conway some time ago, for a young relation of his about an ensigncy. I know he put him on his list, and all I wish and desire of you is (if it be to be done easily) to act the Ghost in 'Hamlet,' and only to say,—

This visitation, Conway,
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.

There is no occasion for you to put on Francis the First's armour. But to be

2244. TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

My Lord, *Strawberry Hill, May* 12, 1783.

I did not know, till I received the honour of your Lordship's letter, that any obstruction had been given to your charter. I congratulate your Lordship and the Society on the defeat of that opposition, which does not seem to have been a liberal one. The pursuit of national antiquities has rarely been an object, I believe, with any university: why should they obstruct others from marching in that track? I have often thought the English Society of Antiquaries have gone out of their way when they meddled with Roman remains, especially if not discovered within our island. Were I to speak out, I should own that I hold most reliques of the Romans that have been found in Britain, of little consequence, unless relating to such emperors as visited us. Provincial armies stationed in so remote and barbarous a quarter as we were then, acted little, produced little

serious: as the commission wanted is for any place or service, and not to make a parading officer in the Park, it would be a kind thing in you so far to interfere and (I would not wish you to go a step further) to learn whether her Ladyship's application is likely to succeed in any short time; for the young man is at present rather a burthen on his relation, who, having a family of his own to provide for, ought to make his charity not only begin but keep at home.

I am much obliged to you for your two last letters, and particularly for the entertaining account of Barry's pictures; but I would rather be out of his Elysium than so far out of your books that you should think me incapable of being persuaded though convinced. That sentence of yours is a severer satire than any I ever penned: I hope it is an unjust one; but self is blind. However, I do assure I hope to see you shortly, for though I mean to go to Nuneham before I come to London, and to keep his Majesty's birth-day [4th June] with his Lordship, yet I intend to visit you, and a few other of my friends, when that birth-day has thinned the town a little.

I will conclude this scrawl with an anecdote which I believe will be new to you, though of an oldish date. Soon after the news of Brown's death had reached the royal ear, he went over to Richmond gardens, and in a tone of great satisfaction said to the under gardener, "Brown is dead: now Mellicant, you and I can do here what we please."[1] If this is not a characteristic trait I know not what is. I shall not leave Aston before the 1st of June; therefore you will have time to favour me with another letter, if this reaches you soon, though the bearer is not yet certain what day he shall set out. Yours very truly,

W. Mason.

[1] "Mason is so delighted with the aptness of Lord Jersey's gardener to receive instructions, that I believe he would willingly pass a month or two with him." *W. Whitehead to Lord Harcourt, Sept.* 18, 1782. (MS.)—"I dare say Mr. Mason told you with what extreme complacency he looked round on all his operations at this place. I should have told you, if I had come back, how his vanity swaggered. 'This I do not repent of;' 'I was rather lucky here;' and 'This (of at least half-a-dozen things) was absolutely the best alteration I ever made in my life.'" *W. Whitehead to Lord Harcourt, Middleton Park, Aug.* 22, 1784. (MS.)—Cunningham.

worth being remembered. Tombstones erected to legionary officers and their families, now dignified by the title of *inscriptions;* and banks and ditches that surrounded camps, which we understand much better by books and plans, than by such faint fragments, are given with much pomp, and tell us nothing new. Your Lordship's new foundation seems to proceed on a much more rational and more useful plan. The biography of the illustrious of your country will be an honour to Scotland, to those illustrious, and to the authors; and may contribute considerably to the general history; for the investigation of particular lives may bring out many anecdotes that may unfold secrets of state, or explain passages in such histories as have been already written; especially as the manners of the times may enter into private biography, though before Voltaire, *manners* were rarely weighed in general history, though very often the sources of considerable events. I shall be very happy to see such lives as shall be published, while I remain alive.

I cannot contribute anything of consequence to your Lordship's meditated account of John Law. I have heard many anecdotes of him, though none that I can warrant, particularly that of the duel for which he fled early.[1] I met the other day with an account in some French literary gazette, I forget which, of his having carried off the wife of another man. Lady Catherine Law, his wife, lived, during his power in France, in the most stately manner. Your Lordship knows, to be sure, that he died, and is buried at Venice. I have two or three different prints of him, and an excellent head of him in crayons by Rosalba, the best of her portraits.[2] It is certainly very like, for, were the flowing wig converted into a female head-dress, it would be the exact resemblance of Lady Wallingford, his daughter, whom I see frequently at the Duchess of Montrose's, and who has by no means a look of the age to which she is arrived. Law was a very extraordinary man, but not at all an estimable one.

I don't remember whether I ever told your Lordship that there are many charters of your ancient kings preserved in the Scots College at Paris, and probably many other curiosities. I think I did mention many paintings of the old house of Lenox in the ancient castle at Aubigny.

[1] Compare Evelyn in his Memoirs, under 22nd April, 1694. A reward of 50*l.* for Law's apprehension appeared in the 'London Gazette' of the 7th January, 1695.—Wright.

[2] Rosalba's portrait of John Law, sold at the Strawberry Hill Sale for 15*l.* 15*s.* (21st day, Lot 73).—Cunningham.

2245. TO THE HON. THOMAS FITZWILLIAM.[1]

Berkeley Square, May 16, 1783.

I FEAR, Sir, that I must have appeared very ungrateful and negligent for not thanking you the instant I had the honour of receiving your letter; but the truth is, that lest I should give you the double trouble of two letters from me, I waited till your present arrived, which the carrier brought to me but half an hour ago.

The beauty and curiosity of the basin,[2] great as they are, scarce could add to my confusion. It was considerable enough before! How could I suppose myself entitled to such a favour? such an honour? I must ever be partial to my house and inconsiderable collection, since they were curious enough to amuse you, and to make you recollect their still more inconsiderable possessor. Since you have been so favourable to all three, I must flatter myself that whenever you are at Richmond, you will condescend to visit once more a house to which you have added so rare an ornament, and a person who will be very impatient to thank you in person.

The basin, which is perfect, is, I believe, Turkish. I have a small plate, but very inferior in beauty and preservation, which was given to me as Turkish; and the characters on the outside of your basin, Sir, seem to me Eastern; but I question very much whether the art of gilding the composition is not only extremely ancient, but an art lost. It resembles those Moorish mosaics which are said to adorn the Alhambra in Spain.

You have added to this great favour, Sir, by giving me a pretence for asking the honour of a visit from Lady Fitzwilliam; and if you and Mrs. Fitzwilliam are ever so good as to meet her at Strawberry Hill, you will make completely happy one who has the honour to be, with the highest respect and gratitude,

Sir,

Your most obliged and most obedient humble Servant,

HORACE WALPOLE.

[1] Now first published. "The envelope is lost; but it bears internal evidence of the person it is addressed to. The last Lord Fitzwilliam was a younger son, and did not succeed, I believe, to the title more than ten years or so before his death. This letter appears to have been written to him when he was only the Hon. Mr. Fitzwilliam. His Christian name was Thomas, I believe; he died about 1832 or 1833, and on his death the peerage became extinct." *Henry Castleman, Beech House, near Ringwood.* —CUNNINGHAM.

[2] In Walpole's Catalogue of his Strawberry Hill collection, is this entry, p. 14:—"A bason of Turkish earthenware, gilt within; a present from Mr. Fitzwilliam."—CUNNINGHAM.

2246. TO GEORGE HARDINGE, ESQ.

Berkeley Square, May 17, 1783.

Though I shall not be fixed at Strawberry on this day fortnight, I will accept your offer, dear Sir, because my time is more at my disposal than yours, and you may not have any other day to bestow upon me later. I thank you for your second, which I shall read as carefully as I did the former. It is not your fault if you have not yet made Sir Thomas Rumbold white as driven snow to me.[1] Nature has providentially given us a powerful antidote to eloquence, or the criminal that has the best advocate would escape. But, when rhetoric and logic stagger my lords the judges, in steps prejudice, and, without one argument that will make a syllogism, confutes Messrs. Demosthenes, Tully, and Hardinge, and makes their lordships see as clearly as any old woman in England, that *belief* is a much better rule of *faith* than *demonstration*. This is just my case: I do believe, nay, and I will believe, that no man ever went to India with honest intentions. If he returns with 100,000*l.* it is plain that I was in the right. But I have still a stronger proof; my Lord Coke says, "Set a thief to catch a thief;" my Lord Advocate[2] says, "Sir Thomas is a rogue:" *ergo*.—I cannot give so complete an answer to the rest of your note, as I trust I have done to your pleadings, because the latter is in print, and your note is manuscript. Now, unfortunately, I cannot read half of it; for, give me leave to say, that either your hand or my spectacles are so bad, that I generally guess at your meaning rather than decipher it, and this time the context has not served me well.

2247. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, May 29, 1783.

I am glad to have nothing to tell you worth telling. We have subsided suddenly into a comfortable calm. Not only war has disappeared, but also the jostling of ministries, the hostilities of factions,

[1] The bill of pains and penalties against Sir Thomas Rumbold, late governor of Madras, was at this time in its progress through the House of Commons. On the 1st of July, the further proceedings upon the bill were adjourned to the 1st of October; by which means the whole business fell to the ground.—Wright.

[2] Henry Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville.—Wright.

the turbulence of county associations, and the mutinous spirit of disbanded regiments. The signal repulse given to the proposed Reformation of Parliament seems to have dashed all that rashness of innovation. The ousted Ministers do not attempt a division in either House of Parliament. In the Lords, where most vigour was expected, Lord Shelburne and the late Chancellor made so ridiculous a figure, that even they themselves appear ashamed. Mr. William Pitt, though little supported, indulges himself in shining; and does shine marvellously. His language is thought equal to his father's; his reasoning much superior; and no wonder, if at all good! He is less deficient, even when speaking on affairs of money; and in his last speech, had more fire than usual. Is not all this wonderful at twenty-three? Is not it wonderful, when he can shine, though within the orbit of Mr. Fox, and opposed to him?

This is all that is memorable, but a new suicide. A Mr. Powell, a tool of Lord Holland, and left by him in the Pay Office, was dismissed last year for a deficiency in his accounts of 70,000*l.* It is not yet known whence this happened; nor do I know, however ill the appearance, that he was guilty of dishonesty. Still, he had sworn to a false account, and was to be prosecuted for perjury. Mr. Burke, on succeeding Colonel Barré in the Pay Office, restored this man and another disgraced at the same time,—as Burke says, from commiseration of their distracted shame. Great censure was passed on that restoration. Mr. Burke vehemently defended himself in the House, and was supported; but the men were given up in two days; and in two days more Powell cut his throat.[1]

[1] Two individuals, Powell and Bambridge, the one cashier, the other accountant of the Army Pay-office, having been accused of malversation in the discharge of their functions, had been dismissed by Colonel Barré from their situations, while he was Paymaster of the Forces, under Lord Shelburne's administration. One of the first acts of Mr. Burke, on coming again into that office, was to reinstate, without previously consulting Mr. Fox, both these individuals. On Mr. Martin having said, in the House of Commons, that he looked upon their restoration as a gross and daring insult to the public, Mr. Burke rose in great heat, and exclaimed, "It is a gross and daring"—but, before he proceeded further, Mr. Sheridan pulled him down on his seat. This took place on the 2nd of May. On the 19th, Sir Cecil Wray having expressed his astonishment that the new paymaster should have reinstated two persons suspected of so great a crime as the embezzlement of public money, Mr. Burke apologised for the violence he had displayed on the former evening; but said, that "nothing was farther from his intention than to offer an excuse for what he had done relating to the two unfortunate gentlemen; he felt such a sunshine of content within, that, if the act was undone, he was convinced he should do it again. He called Messrs. Powell and Bambridge two unfortunate men, and said they had been committed to his protection by Providence; one of them had been with him, and appeared almost distracted; he was absolutely afraid the poor man would lose his

This happened as if to convince the newly-arrived French, that self-murder is a weekly event in this country. We have not only the Duc de Chartres, but three ladies of the Court, the Ducs de Coigny, Fitz-James, and Polignac, husband of the Queen's favourite, and various others, and more coming. These wise men from the East, like those of ancient time, are led by a star to a stable; their great object was Newmarket; at least, the Royal Duke's horses and dogs are so much his taste, that he has a brace of them engraved on his buttons, in the most indecent attitudes; and, at the first dinner made for him, pointed out the particular representations to Lady ——. As our newspapers take as great liberties as any Prince of the Blood, they have made due mention of such vulgar indelicacy; and, as it gave great offence, his Serene Highness has not exhibited his stud and kennel any more.

The papers say that the Imperial Freebooters, male and female, have remitted their invasion of Turkey, on having all their demands complied with; but, as they covet all, I should not think pusillanimity would abate their appetites. Are vultures tamed by one bellyful?

Our lawyers flatter me, that one more session will complete the discussion of Cavalier Mozzi's affair. Without Mr. Duane I do not know what we should have done. He is patient, cool, attentive, and very intelligent. I must do justice to Mr. Sharpe, who really is very active and zealous for the Cavalier.

Mr. Robert Walpole, your diplomatic brother at Lisbon, is come over for a few months; and has brought a young wife, the daughter of a Scottish merchant settled there, who is the phenomenon of the day.[1] She is a regular beauty, but in my eyes less pleasing than my nieces, the Waldegraves and Miss Keppel.[2] The last, with a little too much plumpness, has a most divine face, with exact

senses; this much he was sure of, that the sight of his grey hairs, and the condition in which he had seen him, had so affected and overcome him, that he was scarcely able to come down to the House." Several members expressed their strong disapprobation of Mr. Burke's conduct, and the business would have been agitated anew, had not Powell a few days after put an end to his existence with a razor, and Mr. Rigby announced that Bambridge was removed from his situation. In July, Bambridge was tried on an information filed against him in the Court of King's Bench, for conniving at the concealment of forty-eight thousand pounds, and found guilty; and, in November, he was sentenced to pay a fine of two thousand pounds, and be confined in the King's Bench Prison for six months.—Wright.

[1] The Honourable Robert Walpole, fourth and youngest son of Horatio first Lord Walpole, and envoy at Lisbon, married, in 1780, Diana, daughter of Walter Grosett, Esq., a merchant of that city.—Walpole.

[2] Anna Maria, eldest daughter of Frederick Keppel, Bishop of Exeter.—Walpole.

features, beautiful skin, and sweet countenance. Lady Horatia is extremely pretty, and like the Duchess; but not of that great style and commanding glory. Lady Maria, the handsomest of the three sisters, has a spirit and sensible vivacity, with a perfect person and lovely hands and arms, that make her more charming than an irreproachable beauty, as Mrs. Robert Walpole is. The Duchess of Devonshire,[1] the empress of fashion, is no beauty at all. She was a very fine woman, with all the freshness of youth and health, but verges fast to a coarseness. A more perfect model than any of them, but in miniature, Lady Jersey,[2] is going to Paris, and will be very angry if they do not admire her as much as she intends they should. Good night! You perceive by my babble that I have nothing to say, and fill my paper with any trifle.

2248. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 31, 1783.

Though your letter is dated on the 19th, I did not receive it till yesterday. Mr. Alderson left it at my door just as I was getting into my chaise to come hither, and did not send up word he was there, or I should certainly have desired to see him. However, I wrote a line immediately to General Conway, desiring he would look over his memoranda for a recommendation of Lady Holdernesse, (for you did not even tell me the young gentleman's name,) and send me word whether anything was likely to be done for him soon. I expect to hear to-morrow before this goes away.

I tell you honestly that this was all I could do. When Mr. Conway was made Commander-in-Chief, I earnestly recommended to him to be strict in doing justice, as I think nothing so cruel as to have boys by favour put over old officers; and not above two months ago encouraged him to resist such a partiality for one of his own nephews, telling him that such a refusal would serve him to plead to others. As I knew too that from my friendship with him I should frequently be solicited to apply to him, I desired that whenever I should, he would not comply with my request if it was not a perfectly just and reasonable one, and I promised that I would approve instead

[1] Lady Georgiana, eldest daughter of John, first Earl Spencer, born in 1757, and married, in 1774, to William, fourth Duke of Devonshire.—Walpole.

[2] Frances, sole daughter and heir of Dr. Philip Twysden, Bishop of Raphoe, younger son of Sir William Twysden, of Roydon Hall, in Kent, Baronet; and wife of George Bussy, fourth Earl of Jersey.—Walpole.

of taking his refusal ill. I went farther; for one of my own nephews asked me to get him made one of Mr. Conway's Aid-de-Camps: I positively refused. I said Mr. Conway had been forty years in the army, had commanded different regiments, and must know meritorious officers whom he ought to prefer, and whom it would hurt if he took my recommendation; or that he would be hurt himself if he did not oblige me. I am sure you will approve my conduct, and therefore I do not apologise for doing no more than asking your question, except saying that the young man was desirous of real service. Indeed at present, when so many regiments are to be broken, I conclude Mr. Conway must be overwhelmed with solicitations, even for the real service, as many officers will be, must be content to be saved without greater indulgence.

I am shocked at what you tell me of the *son-in-law* [Lord Caermarthen], and pity the Countess [of Holdernesse] much, yet I am not surprised: there is no discouragement to infamous proceedings. Mr. Falkener has just abandoned a daughter of Lord Ashburnham, with worse circumstances if possible than Lord Egremont did my niece. You will not wonder when you reflect who was his patron.

You say I am very severe: why I am very angry. What the deuce is the fulness or emptiness of the town to you! Am I never to see you but after a plague? Will you never come to London but when you have not an acquaintance in it? Beauties or Ministers may affect to dread being crowded to death, but nobody haunts us who have no power, no credit. I care for as few as you, and yet I can go tamely about and nobody molests me; if you will not come till you can give the law, why I shall be in my grave. You had better laugh as I do, at my own departed visions. I will not give up my friends and the world (as far as I choose to have anything to do with it) because it does not please to be amended accordingly to the plan I had drawn for it. Well, but you say you will come; so I will scold no more, though I cannot bear your flinging away your talents on a province or country town; you was born to fill the mouth of Fame and not to be proclaimed by a penny trumpet at a village fair.

Most of the French invasion are returned. I have not seen one of them, cock or hen. I was so scandalously treated about my dear old friend's papers, that, except her memory and Tonton, I will never have anything to do more with or love anything that comes from France. I like Mr. Meynell's expression; he is so tired of these visitors that he says *he wishes we were safe at war again.*

Your story on Brown's death is worth a million, yet I can match it from the same *mouth* [George III.], though I cannot write it without committing some names that I must not mention. If I ever do see you, you shall hear it, that is, if I don't forget it; but we meet so seldom, that half the anecdotes I had for you will be mouldy. There is no sense in living but in a great capital; one can choose one's way of life, and what sort of company one pleases. There is more variety of sense, and fewer prejudices: I am sure from my own practice one can live as retiredly as one chooses, and do more what one will than in any other place, without any ennui. Pray what is one to do in the country, if so unfortunate as to grow tired of one's first favourite, one's self? What! have recourse to one's neighbours? oh! they are charming company! They tell you some antiquated lie out of the newspapers, that in London did not gain credit in the steward's parlour even on its birthday. No, I have no patience with your living amongst Country Squires, instead of living amongst men.

Sunday, June 1.

I have got a note from Mr. Conway. He says he finds on his list a Mr. Alderson recommended by Lady Holdernesse; but that she applied before the conclusion of the war, when he thought it would rain ensigncies; that he is now left with above an hundred engagements, and that the new plan of *seconding two companies* (I don't understand military Hebrew) *with their officers on all the corps* will increase his difficulty of performing them. This does not look as if your friend would be served soon. However, as he bids me tell him if Mr. Alderson is the person, as I shall tell him it is within a letter, I do not despair. I write a line to Mr. Alderson to desire he will call on me in town on Friday; and this I send to London, by a gentleman who dines with me, to Lord Harcourt, who will deliver it to you on the birthday [4th June],

> When you are singing the day and singing the song,
> And singing the day all night long.[1]

P.S. I have writ to Mr. Conway again. The Prince of Wales and the Duc de Chartres sup with him to-night. I excused myself, and as it is a glorious day I have told him how glad I am to be here

[1] Parody on Colley Cibber, or rather an imitation of Fielding's Parody on Cibber —Cunningham.

rather than in Warwick Street! and that as much sun as would gild a daisy, is preferable in my eyes to all the Dan-de-Lions and Cœur-de-Lions, that ever supped since Charlemagne.

2249. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, June 9, 1783.

I HAVE seen Mr. Alderson, and told him what General Conway says, to whom I have spoken again, and who will serve his friend when he can, though it will not be soon, from the circumstances I mentioned, and of which Mr. Alderson allows the force.

There are two new pieces published about Gray's Poems; one is called 'Criticisms on the Elegy,' and pretends to be written by Johnson.[1] I was told it would divert me, that it seems to criticise Gray, but really laughs at Johnson. I sent for it and skimmed it over, but am not at all clear what it means—no recommendation of any thing. I rather think the author wishes to be taken by Gray's admirers for a ridiculer of Johnson, and by the latter's for a censurer of Gray.

The other piece is a professed defence of Gray against Johnson, by Potter, the translator of 'Æschylus.'[2] It is sensibly written, is civil to Johnson and yet severe; but, though this is the declared intention, I have heard that the true object was to revenge the attack on Lord Lyttelton at the instigation of Mrs. Montagu, who has her full share of incense, and who, with insipid Bishop Hurd, is pronounced the two best critics of this or any age! Were I Johnson, I had rather be criticised than flattered so fulsomely. There is nothing more foolish than the hyperboles of contemporaries on one another, who, like the nominal Dukes of Aquitaine and Normandy at a coronation, have place given to them above all peers, and the next day shrink to simple knights.

I have been reading some more of those pinchbeck encomiums in Beattie's new volume.[3] He talks of the *great* Lord Lyttelton,

[1] 'A Criticism on the Elegy in a Country Church-yard, being a continuation of Dr. Johnson's Criticism on the Poem of Gray.' This was written by Dr. Young, Professor of Greek at Glasgow. In a letter of Dr. Johnson to Mrs. Piozzi, he mentions this book, vol. ii. p. 289.—MITFORD.

[2] 'An Inquiry into some Passages in Dr. Johnson's Lives of the Poets, particularly his Observations on Lyric Poetry and the Odes of Gray, by R. Potter.' 4to. 1783. —MITFORD.

[3] 'Dissertations, Moral and Critical, by James Beattie, LL.D.' 1783, 4to.—CUNNINGHAM.

and of the sublime and *apostolic* simplicity of my Lords Hurd and Porteus. Should not you like to hear St. Peter toast Madame Hagerdorne with the former, and St. Paul in a fast sermon out-flattering Bishop Butler with the latter? I have waded through many a silly book in my day, as my eyes know to their sorrow, but, poor souls, they never had a more cruel penance imposed on them than this quarto of Beattie, though they did read the whole reign of 'Henry II.,' all Cumberland's works in metre and out of metre, all the Archæologias, and many other reverend bodies of antiquity and heraldry. Beattie's, indeed, is the reverse of those *anile tomes*, for it is *in usum* of the cradle and nursery. I have got through one hundred and nine pages, but, dearly as I love quartos, I doubt I shall never compass the other five hundred and fifty pages, though in equity I would fain try whether I cannot find one page that is not the poorest common-place that was ever repenned. He calls his work 'Dissertations, moral and critical.' I have corrected the last word in my copy into *Tritical*.

You will find more merit in Mr. Crabbe's poem of 'The Village,' at least in the first canto. The second is a tribute, and much too long, to the Duke of Rutland's passionate fondness for his brother, and nothing to the purpose of the first part. The brave young man[1] deserved an immortal epitaph; but this is a funeral sermon. However, Mr. Crabbe is a more agreeable poet than your heroic friend Mr. Hayley, and writes lines that one can remember.

My treillage of Roses begs its duty to the flower-garden at Nuneham, and my towers long to be gossips at the christening of the tower that is to be there. My Printing-House has its longings too, and if you have a mind to make it completely happy, you will contribute something to the nosegay, of which I have yet got nothing but Mr. Whitehead's charming sprig. Remember, I have never printed anything of yours yet, and my press cannot die in peace till it does.

[1] Captain Robert Manners, one of the three captains killed in Rodney's great victory.—CUNNINGHAM.

2250. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 11, 1783.

You never gave me a commission before, my dear Sir, that I was unwilling even to try to execute; but you will see in a moment that I am the most improper person in the world to attempt what is required. I say nothing of my gratitude to you for all the trouble you have taken for me on a thousand occasions, which ought to make me decline no task to oblige you. In the present case, I should have a stronger incitement—zeal for the cause of inoculation, which I hope will not suffer by the absurdity of a 'Leyden Gazette,' though falling in with the prejudices of Italy and Germany.[1] Absurdity catches and spreads like the rapid mischief of fire. In general, I can assure you that the death of Prince Octavius has neither been imputed to inoculation, nor checked the practice. He was recovered of the small-pox, and died of a sudden illness; and the two other children are quite recovered, though they had been unhealthy before; and some of them were bathed in the sea for two years together, along with Prince Alfred, who died last year, and was *not* inoculated.

This is all the satisfaction I can give you. To make inquiry of the King's physicians would in *me* be highly blameable. Consider, in the first place, how I am connected; and, in the next, should the physicians tell me, which it is not probable they would, (and if they did not, what could I say?) that the child died of any other complaint, would it be decent for me to repeat it? would it not be trumpeted about till it would reach both London and Anspach? and, the more credit given to my report, the more I should be quoted. I choose, therefore, to remain in perfect ignorance of what the child died, only convinced that it was not killed by inoculation. You may tell the Great-Duke what is most true, that I am in the country, and not *à portée* to see the royal physicians: persuade him to wait, and he will

[1] The Great-Duke of Tuscany was going to inoculate his children, when he saw in a Leyden Gazette, that Prince Octavius had been killed by inoculation, and immediately desired Sir Horace Mann to inquire of Mr. Walpole (with whom he knew Sir Horace corresponded) whether it was true. Mr. Walpole knew, on his side, that the Great-Duke opened letters, and therefore did not choose to speak out.—Walpole.

hear that inoculation has not lost a grain of character; and do not let him deprive his children of such a blessing, because the 'Leyden Gazette' is a fool and liar. Were the fact truth, is *one* child lost an argument against millions preserved? if the child was unhealthy before, would it be a reason for not inoculating children that are well?

I am very sorry that your nephew has any embarrassment in his family. Parents are much to be pitied! how difficult for fondness and prudence to be both satisfied, and to conduct their charges safely into port! At present, the incumbrance seems double. Sons can scarce avoid the contagion of gaming; daughters make unworthy choices—for how can they make good! If they marry titles and wealth, may they not be sent back to their parents in two or three years to be maintained—or even before they are married? Such rascals are some of our young fellows! Just such an instance has happened in Lord ——'s family.

P.S. Since I wrote my letter, I have seen a person who tells me the young Prince was at the sixth day of the small-pox in the most favourable manner, was seized with convulsions, and died—it is supposed, from a pock on the brain; which has sometimes happened, and may just as well happen in the natural way. This is a *hors d'œuvre*, nor do I know a word of news.

2251. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, June 20, 1783.

I DID suspect, Madam, from the *sort* of commendations that I heard bestowed, and from the *sort* of persons who bestowed them, that I should not be much edified by the *improvements* of Hatfield. The Earl and Countess did me the honour of inviting me to see them two years ago; but as I neither love to flatter nor disoblige, I have not been—*and two years* have certainly not made me more of *a going* disposition. Brocket Hall I never did see, and nothing has made me more going *thither*. When I play for green gowns with fair nymphs, *they* are not of the coterie of the nymphs and swains that I should meet there, *il s'en faut beaucoup*. Lord Chewton won the prize, and consequently there would be no gallantry in the case.

I came to town yesterday, expecting, like Cibber, *to meet the Revolution*,[1] but I am told that all is readjusted. I am glad of it; I wish the present Administration to last, which is not often the colour of my inclination towards Ministries.

The month of June has been as abominable as any one of its ancestors in all the pedigree of the Junes. I was literally half-drowned on Sunday night. It rained through two stories, and into the Green Closet at Strawberry, and my bed-chamber was wet to its smock. The gutters were stopped, or could not carry off the deluge fast enough. Margaret prayed to St. Rainbow, but as he never appears till it is too late, we were forced to have recourse to mortal help, and litter all the floors with hay to soak up the inundation.

I had a worse woe the next night. The house of De Guines had notified to Lady Aylesbury their intention of visiting Strawberry, and she had proposed to bring them to breakfast. At first I refused, but reflecting that they might invade me unawares, like the Duc de Chartres, I had agreed that she should bring them yesterday; but, lo! on Monday morning Lady Pembroke wrote to me that she would bring them to drink tea that evening. I told her my arrangement, but left it to her option to do as she pleased. From dinner-time I sat at the window watching for them, and taking every old woman with a basket on her head for a coach-and-six. It rained all the time, as it had done the preceding evening. At last, at half an hour after seven, as I had left it to their option, and the night was so bad and dark, I concluded they had given it up, and called for my tea—but, alas! at a quarter before eight the bell rang at the gate—and, behold, a procession of the Duke, his two daughters, the French Ambassador, (on whom I had meant to sink myself,) Lady Pembroke, Lord Herbert, and Lord Robert. The first word M. de Guines said was to beg I would show them all I could—imagine, Madam, what I could show them when it was pitch dark!

Of all houses upon earth, mine, from the painted glass and over-hanging trees, wants the sun the most, besides the Star Chamber and passage being obscured on purpose to raise the Gallery. They ran their foreheads against Henry VII., and took the grated door of the Tribune for the dungeon of the castle. I mustered all the candlesticks in the house, but before they could be

[1] Walpole was fond of this illustration, which he found in Colley Cibber's 'Apology.' See it used before in vol. iii. p. 323.—CUNNINGHAM.

lighted up, the young ladies, who, by the way, are extremely natural, agreeable, and civil, were seized with a panic of highwaymen, and wanted to go. I laughed and said, I believed there was no danger, for that I had not been robbed these two years. However, I was not quite in the right; they were stopped in Knightsbridge by two footpads, but Lady Pembroke having lent them a servant besides their own unique, they escaped—and so much for the French and the rain: I wish the latter were as near going as the former! To-morrow I dine at Gunnersbury, and then I hope my troubles will be over for the summer.

I called on Lady Frances Douglas, but could not deliver your Ladyship's commands, for she was just going to town to be presented, and did not let me in.

2252. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, June 24, 1783.

Though your Lordship's partiality extends even to my letters, you must perceive that they grow as antiquated as the writer. News are the soul of letters: when we give them a body of our own invention, it is as unlike to life as a statue. I have withdrawn so much from the world, that the newspapers know everything before me, especially since they have usurped the province of telling everything, private as well as public; and consequently a great deal more than I should wish to know, or like to report. When I do hear the transactions of much younger people, they do not pass from my ears into my memory; nor does your Lordship interest yourself more about them than I do. Yet still, when one reduces one's department to such narrow limits, one's correspondence suffers by it. However, as I desire to show only my gratitude and attachment, not my wit, I shall certainly obey your Lordship as long as you are content to read my letters, after I have told you fairly how little they can entertain you.

For imports of French, I believe we shall have few more. They have not ruined us so totally by the war, much less enriched themselves so much by it, but that they who have been here, complained so piteously of the expensiveness of England, that probably they will deter others from a similar jaunt; nor, such is their fickleness, are the French constant to anything but admiration of themselves. Their Anglomanie, I hear, has mounted, or descended, from our

customs to our persons. English people are in fashion at Versailles. A Mr. Ellis,[1] who wrote some pretty verses at Bath two or three years ago, is a favourite there. One who was so, or may be still, the *Beau Dillon*, came upon a very different errand; in short, to purchase at any price a book written by Linguet, which was just coming out, called 'Antoinette.' That will tell your Lordship why the *Beau Dillon*[2] was the messenger.

Monsieur de Guignes and his daughters came hither; but it was at eight o'clock at night in the height of the deluge. You may be sure I was much flattered by such a visit! I was forced to light candles to show them anything; and must have lighted the moon to show them the views. If this is their way of seeing England, they might as well look at it with an opera-glass from the shore of Calais.

Mr. Mason is to come to me on Sunday, and will find me mighty busy in making my lock of hay, which is not yet cut. I don't know why, but people are always more anxious about their hay than their corn, or twenty other things that cost them more. I suppose my Lord Chesterfield, or some such dictator, made it fashionable to care about one's hay. Nobody betrays solicitude about getting in his rents.

We have exchanged spring and summer for autumn and winter, as well as day for night. If religion or law enjoined people to love light, and prospects, and verdure, I should not wonder if perverseness made us hate them; no, nor if society made us prefer living always in town to solitude and beauty. But that is not the case. The most fashionable hurry into the country at Christmas and Easter, let the weather be ever so bad; and the finest ladies, who will go no whither till eleven at night, certainly pass more tiresome hours in London alone than they would in the country. But all this is no business of mine: they do what they like, and so do I; and I am exceedingly tolerant about people who are perfectly indifferent to

[1] George Ellis, Esq., the friend of Canning and Sir Walter Scott.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Colonel Edward Dillon. "I was particularly acquainted with him," says Wraxall, in his posthumous Memoirs; "he descended, I believe, collaterally from the noble Irish family of the Earls of Roscommon, though his father carried on the trade of a wine-merchant at Bordeaux; but he was commonly called 'Le Comte Edouard Dillon,' and 'Le Beau Dillon.' In my estimation he possessed little pretension to the latter epithet; but he surpassed most men in stature, like Lord Whitworth, Lord Hugh Seymour, and the other individuals on whom Marie Antoinette cast a favourable eye. That she showed him some imprudent marks of predilection at a ball, which, when they took place, excited comment, is true; but they prove only indiscretion and levity on her part."—WRIGHT

me. The sun and the seasons were not gone out of fashion when I was young, and I may do what I will with them now I am old: for fashion is fortunately no law but to its devotees. Were I five-and-twenty, I dare to say I should think every whim of my contemporaries very wise, as I did then. In one light I am always on the side of the young, for they only silently despise those who do not conform to their ordonnances; but age is very apt to be angry at the change of customs, and partial to others no better founded. It is happy when we are occupied by nothing more serious. It is happy for a nation when mere fashions are a topic that can employ its attention; for, though dissipation may lead to graver moments, it commences with ease and tranquillity: and they at least who live before the scene shifts are fortunate, considering and comparing themselves with the various regions who enjoy no parallel felicity. I confess my reflections are *couleur de rose* at present. I did not much expect to live to see peace, without far more extensive ruin than has fallen on us. I will not probe futurity in search of less agreeable conjectures. Prognosticators may see many seeds of dusky hue; but I am too old to look forwards. Without any omens, common sense tells one, that in the revolution of ages nations must have unprosperous periods. But why should I torment myself for what may happen in twenty years after my death, more than for what may happen in two hundred? Nor shall I be more interested in the one than in the other. This is no indifference for my country: I wish it could always be happy; but so I do to all other countries. Yet who could ever pass a tranquil moment, if such future speculations vexed him?

Adieu, my good Lord! I doubt this letter has more marks of senility than the one I announced at the beginning. When I had no news to send you, it was no reason for tiring you with commonplaces. But your Lordship's indulgence spoils me. Does not it look as if I thought, that, because you commend my letters, you would like whatever I say? Will not Lady Strafford think that I abuse your patience? I ask both your pardons, and am to both a most devoted humble servant.

2253.[1] TO MR. HIGHMORE.[2]

Strawberry Hill, June 28, 1783.

I AM much obliged to you, Sir, for the favour of your drawing; an honour I could not expect from a gentleman with whom I have not the pleasure of being acquainted; which last circumstance I hope will be my excuse if I do not direct this letter properly

You have expressed well, Sir, what I meant except one particular, in which perhaps I have not delivered myself clearly. I intended to describe the figure as detaching itself not only from the frame but from the ground, for, as I have said, the figure retired into the chamber at the end of the gallery: it would be more awkward to suppose the whole picture walking, and not the mere figure itself. You will, I flatter myself, Sir, forgive this observation, and be assured I am with great respect, &c.,

HORACE WALPOLE.

2254. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 8, 1783.

Two days ago, who should walk into my room but Sir Horace Mann,—not *the* Sir Horace indeed that I could have most wished to see, and whom I have not seen in two-and-forty years; and whom, alas!—yet one I was very glad to see! I turned him round to look for his wings; for he certainly flies! He tells me charming miracles of your health and youth. I hope the Goddess of correspondence is proud of us, and intends we shall write to one another as long as Abraham and Methusalem would have done, if they had learnt to write.

Your nephew had not unpacked his portmanteau; so, I have not received Cavalier Mozzi's or my own letters, but shall have them before this departs.

News I have none, or should have written to you before now. We have had one or two qualms, which looked very much as if the new Ministers did not sit easy upon a certain stomach. They were

[1] Now first collected. From the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for 1816, Part i. p. 578. CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Joseph Highmore, the painter.—CUNNINGHAM.

very near discharged on the establishment of the Heir; but all was compromised. The Parliament rises next week. If nothing happens *then*, the summer will probably conclude tranquilly.

My name-sake,[1] cousin, and nephew has got a son. As it will be the descendant of my father as well as of my uncle, I hope it will be the heir of the family. One symptom looks as if it would be. Its father wrote to Lord Orford to ask him to be god-father; he not only consented graciously, but invited the parents to Houghton, with this frantic though promising addition, "that though he had sold his collection of pictures, of which too many were by the same hands, (as if one could have too many Carlo Marattis, Rubens's, and Vandykes!) he hoped my cousin would be satisfied, as his Lordship had gotten *two* excellent Ciprianis!" This Cipriani would not have been worthy to paint the dog-kennel, when the house possessed its original collection; Cipriani is to Guido, as his Lordship is to his grandfather.

I have another nephew going to Florence—for I have nephews enough to people the Promised Land. It is George Cholmondeley, son of Robert, consequently my great-nephew; for I have lived to count third and fourth generations. This George is a young man of sense and honourable principles, and among the best of my nepotism. He has claimed my recommendation to you, and I trust will deserve it better than some of my nephews have done: he has some humour, and some voice, and is musical; but he has not good health, nor always good spirits.

Berkeley Square, July 10.

I came to town yesterday on summons from Lucas, and this morning he and Sharpe and Mr. Duane were with me. Sharpe declared that he had advised Cavalier Mozzi to divide the ten thousand pounds with my Lord, but had received no answer. I said, I knew Cavalier Mozzi's disposition to agreement; but Mr. Duane and I could not act so summarily. In one word, I wish to save six or seven thousand pounds for Cavalier Mozzi, as I see how much pains Lucas has used to get more, whereas little have been employed on the other side. Sharpe said, too, that the Cavalier would have consented, if Lady Orford's woman had not dissuaded him. I proposed, and Mr. Duane seconded me, that Sharpe and Lucas should

[1] Horatio, eldest son of the second Lord Walpole, had married Sophia, youngest daughter of Charles Churchill, Esq., by Lady Maria Walpole, daughter of Sir Robert Walpole by his second wife, and half-sister of the writer of these letters.—Walpole.

state what claims, and to what amount, each reciprocally allows of the other; and then it would be easier for us referees to split the difference. This has brought matters to a point, and I hope one more meeting may terminate the business.

I have not yet heard again from your nephew, but conclude he has sent the letters to Strawberry, which my suddenly coming to town may have prevented my receiving.

Adieu! I am writing after midnight, and panting for breath: the weather is wonderfully sultry, and great mischief has been done by lightning in the counties. Were I not in town, I should delight in such Florentine nights.

2255. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 15, 1783.

I was in town last week, Madam, and just as I was returning I was told poor Mr. Morrice was dead, and Miss Howe has heard so, too; but as I have not seen it yet in the papers, I would flatter myself it is not true, for the only truths which the newspapers tell are those which will give concern to anybody. I am sorry your Ladyship has suffered so much by the heat—for me, I am below all weather, for none affects me. If it could, it would during the two days I passed in London, where I was forced to meet Lord Orford's lawyers. Indeed, as much as I love to have summer in summer, I am tired of this weather—

> The dreaded east is all the wind that blows. [*Pope.*]

it parches the leaves, makes the turf crisp, claps the doors, blows the papers about, and keeps one in a constant mist that gives no dew, but might as well be smoke. The sun sets like a pewter plate red-hot; and then in a moment appears the moon, at a distance, of the same complexion, just as the same orb, in a moving picture, serves for both. I wish modern philosophers had not disturbed all our ideas! Two hundred good years ago celestial and terrestrial affairs hung together, and if a country was out of order it was comfortable to think that the planets ordered, or sympathised with its ails. A sun shorn of his beams, and a moon that only serves to make darkness visible, are mighty homogenial to a distracted state; and when their Ministry is changed every twelve hours, without allaying the

heat or mending the weather, Father Holinshed would have massed the whole in the casualties of the reign, and expected no better till he was to tap a new accession.

As I have meditated so profoundly on the season, you will perceive, Madam, that I had nothing else to talk of, and, consequently, did not write till I had some answer to make. With your letter, I received one from Lord Chewton, to tell me the birth of his daughter, for which event I was anxious. I do not mean that I wished it a girl, nor affect the apathy of the Duke of Devonshire, for though Lord Chewton is no king of the Peak, a boy can shift better than a poor girl. However, dear Lady Chewton is perfectly well, and I am easy.

News I have heard none this month, but the deaths of Irish Peeresses, Lady Middleton and Lady Gage; but as Hibernian Peers spring up like mushrooms, or are mushrooms, I suppose there will be as great plenty of ermine in that country as ever,—perhaps soon of their own growth, without a drawback from *our* Custom House! Here, I am told, no more is to be issued. As the *sun's* train is much curtailed, I suppose he thinks he has stars enough around him: but to change the topic, I was glad that the late Chancellor and his virtue were dragged through the kennel.

I must shift the subject once more, and talk of another no better, myself, or finish my letter. I have given one or two dinners to blue-stockings, and one pedigree dinner to my cousin, the Portuguese beauty, and her husband [Robert Walpole], and his two nephews, Horatio and Thomas; and I have been again commanded to Gunnersbury, where I found Prince William.[1] He had been with the Princess in the morning, and returned of his own accord to dinner. She presented me to him, and I attempted, at the risk of tumbling on my nose, to kiss his hand, but he would not let me. You may trust me, Madam, who am not apt to be intoxicated with Royalty, that he is charming. Lively, cheerful, talkative, manly, well-bred, sensible, and exceedingly proper in all his replies. You may judge how good-humoured he is, when I tell you that he was in great spirits all day, though with us old women—perhaps he thought it preferable to Windsor!

Another day the Jerninghams brought to see my house—whom do you think?—only a *Luxembourg*, a *Lusignan*, and a *Montfort!* I never felt myself so much in the Castle of Otranto. It sounded as if a company of noble Crusaders were come to sojourn with me

[1] Afterwards King William IV.—CUNNINGHAM.

before they embarked for the Holy Land. Still I was a very uncourteous *châtelain*. I did not appear. In short, Mr. Mason, whom I had not seen for a year, was at dinner with me, and was to pass but that one day with me—*cedant arma togæ*—I preferred the 'Heroic Epistle' to a troop of heroes; that is, the supposed author of the one to what I do not suppose the others.

You bid me watch my purse, Madam, when I am in good company. In truth, I am not apt to watch it: yet without my taking the smallest precaution to guard it, it has escaped through two *houses* full of the *best* company in England, and in which there were *bishops* too.

Alas! here is half my letter about myself, and half of that about what I have *not* been doing. It shows how antiquated I am, and how little I know. To complete my personal journal, I send you a vile pun of my own making. Miss Pope has been at Mrs. Clive's this week, and I had not been able to call on them. I wrote a line of excuse, but hoped very soon to salute Miss *Pope's eye*. Excuse my *radotage*—but what better can you expect?

2256. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Wednesday evening, July 23.

As your Ladyship interests yourself about Mr. Morrice, these are to certify you that he is alive; and, I dare to say, merry. Mr. Townley, uncle of the statuarist, and with whom I once dined, at the Grove, came to see my house yesterday, and left word that Mr. Morrice is not only not dead, but better, and at Lausanne, and purposes to winter at Naples; which, methinks, is risking his life at least as much as trying to preserve it, for the earthquakes do not seem at all to have retired into their own channel.

I have been in town to see Lady Chewton, and found her excellent well, and suckling her infanta without mercy. I believe she will be a more staid nurse than the Duchess of Devonshire, who probably will stuff her poor babe into her knotting bag when she wants to play at macao, and forget it.

More French are just come to see the house, a Viscount and Marquis de St. Chamant and a Baron de Montesquieu. I could not leave the Blue Room to their sight, for I have the gout to-day both in my ankle and left hand, but I think it will not be a fit, for the pain is already gone, though it came but in the night. Are you

not prodigiously glad, Madam, that somebody whom you never saw is dead at the farthest end of the globe? My neighbours at Twickenham are overjoyed at the death of Hyder Aly, who, I suppose, they think lived in Lombard Street.

My visitors are gone already: it is literally true that they arrived while I was writing the last paragraph but one, and went away as I finished the last, though I certainly do not write slowly. They are gone to Hampton Court, and return to France to-morrow. Don't you like seeing a house in the time one can write eight lines; and a country in less than one can wash one's hands? I wish all who come to see my house stayed no longer.

2257. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 30, 1783.

I HAVE received yours of the 12th, and Cavalier Mozzi's from your nephew. To the latter's I can say nothing new at present. The last time we met, Mr. Duane and I desired Sharpe and Lucas to try how near they could come in adjusting the separate demands of Lady Orford and my Lord, after we had struck off the unfounded ones on either side. I have no doubt but the two lawyers could have agreed in an hour's time; that is, that they would have agreed to give much advantage to my Lord: but as they choose, I suppose, to seem to deliberate, as physicians do who retire to consult in another room and there talk news, Sharpe and Lucas have taken some weeks to consider. I hope Mr. Duane will see through their juggle; I shall be guided by him.

A thousand thanks to you for the 'Fatti Farnesiani,' but you must tell me the prices, that I may pay your nephew. Do not imagine that I send to Italy for everything I want at your expense; I cost you enough in trouble. It would truly be more kind of you if you said at once, "I paid so much, or so much." As you did not, I insist on your naming the price in your next.

I shall not believe that when the Czarina has whetted her talons, she will go to roost without scratching anybody. They say the plague has cried Hola! nay, that it is at Dantzic. Our Gazette has rung out the bell. The summer is so sultry that it would be formidable indeed!

I have not the honour of being acquainted with Lord and Lady

Algernon Percy: both he and I go so little into public, that I never saw him above once in my life. She is generally commended.

Your nephew did not name his distress about his daughter, and therefore I certainly did not. I pity him; but what can his remonstrances do? passions are not to be allayed by words: love does not lie in the ear.

Thank you for dispensing with me about inoculation. It is most true that its virtues have not suffered in the smallest degree by the late accident; yet, as there was *no* reason it should, I wonder it did not.

I have not a tittle of news for you, good or bad, public or private. It is better that correspondence should suffer, than be supplied by wars and calamities.

We have swarms of French daily; but they come as if they had laid wagers that there is no such place as England, and only wanted to verify its existence, or that they had a mind to dance a minuet on English ground; for they turn on their heel the moment after landing. Three came to see this house last week, and walked through it literally while I wrote eight lines of a letter; for I heard them go up the stairs, and heard them go down, exactly in the time I was finishing no longer a paragraph. It were happy for me had nobody more curiosity than a Frenchman; who is never struck with anything but what he has seen every day at Paris. I am tormented all day and every day by people that come to see my house, and have no enjoyment of it in summer. It would be even in vain to say that the plague is here. I remember such a report in London when I was a child, and my uncle, Lord Townshend, then Secretary of State, was forced to send guards to keep off the crowd from the house in which the plague was said to be; they would go and *see* the plague! Had I been the master of the house, I should have said, as I would to Kings who pretend to cure the King's evil, "*You* cure the evil!—*you* are the evil!" "*You* see the plague!—*you* are the plague!"

Since I began my letter, Mrs. Noel has told me who is your nephew's daughter's innamorato. I now pity him even more than I did. There is madness in the lover's family—how can a parent consent to such an union? I am very tender-hearted on love-cases, especially to women, whose happiness does really depend, for some time at least, on the accomplishment of their wishes: they cannot conceive that another swain might be just as charming. I am not so indulgent to men, who do know that one romance is as good as

another, and that the binding is of little consequence. But must not the blood of a father recoil, when his child would unite with frenzy, and for grandchildren, would bring him lunatics? Oh! I approve your poor nephew's repugnance. I have seen the lover's mother in her moods, and know but *too well* the peril of such alliances! That, and the royal malady I named in my last paragraph, are not enough guarded against. Both sometimes lie dormant for a generation, but rarely are eradicated. On the want of fortune I should be much less restive; and for the profession, if a girl is in love, how can she secure such a prospect of felicity as by marrying a clergyman? I am a little indelicate; but I know why Providence gave us passions; and therefore, however we may dress up and dignify the idea, the most romantic maiden upon earth, whether aware of it or not, is in love with the gender, though its more visible accompaniments may have made the impression. Your Orianas therefore find their account better in a Levite than in an Amadis. I have often wondered dowager Orianas do not always replace Amadis with a cassock. It is almost the only chance they have of not being disappointed. If the bell-wether strays after other ewes, the noise he makes betrays him, and the old crone is sure of reclaiming him. I beg pardon of goddesses for so ungallant a comment; but, however heretical it may sound to ears of twenty, it would be solid advice if dropped in those of forty. Adieu!

2258. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 1, 1783.

It would be great happiness indeed to me, my dear Lord, if such nothings as my letters could contribute to any part of your Lordship's; but as your own partiality bestows their chief merit on them, you see they owe more to your friendship than to the writer. It is not my interest to depreciate them; much less to undermine the foundation of their sole worth. Yet it would be dishonest not to warn your Lordship, that if my letters have had any intrinsic recommendation, they must lose of it every day. Years and frequent returns of gout have made a ruin of me. Dulness, in the form of indolence, grows upon me. I am inactive, lifeless, and so indifferent to most things, that I neither inquire after nor remember any topics that might enliven my letters. Nothing is so insipid as my way of passing my time. But I need not specify what my letters speak

They can have no spirit left; and would be perfectly inanimate, if attachment and gratitude to your Lordship were as liable to be extinguished by old age as our more amusing qualities. I make no new connections, but cherish those that remain with all the warmth of youth and the piety of grey hairs.

The weather here has been, and is, with very few intervals, sultry to this moment. I think it has been of service to me; though by overheating myself I had a few days of lameness. The harvest is half over already all round us; and so pure, that not a poppy or cornflower is to be seen. Every field seems to have been weeded like Brisco's bowling-green. If Ceres, who is at least as old as many of our fashionable ladies, loves tricking herself out in flowers as they do, she must be mortified: and with more reason; for she looks well always with topknots of ultramarine and vermilion, which modern goddesses do not for half so long as they think they do. As Providence showers so many blessings on us, I wish the peace may confirm them! Necessary I am sure it was; and when it cannot restore us, where should we have been had the war continued? Of our situation and prospect I confess my opinion is melancholy, not from present politics but from past. We flung away the most brilliant position, I doubt, for a long season! With politics I have totally done. I wish the present Ministers may last; for I think better of their principles than of those of their opponents (with a few salvos on both sides), and so I do of their abilities. But it would be folly in me to concern myself about new generations. How little a way can I see of their progress!

I am rather surprised at the new Countess of Denbigh. How could a woman be ambitious of resembling Prometheus, to be pawed and clawed and gnawed by a vulture?[1] I beg your Earldom's pardon; but I could not conceive that a coronet was so very tempting!

Lady Browne is quite recovered, unless she relapses from what we suffer at Twickenham-park from a Lord Northesk,[2] an old seaman, who is come to Richmond on a visit to the Duke of Montrose. I think the poor man must be out of his senses, at least he talks us out of ours. It is the most incessant and incoherent rhapsody that ever was heard. He sits by the card-table, and pours

[1] An allusion to Lord Denbigh's figure, and his arms blazoned on a spread eagle.—WRIGHT.

[2] George, sixth Earl of Northesk, a naval officer of distinction, who attained the rank of admiral of the white. He died in 1792.—WRIGHT.

on Mrs. Noel all that ever happened in his voyages or his memory. He details the ship's allowance, and talks to her as if she was his first-mate. Then in the mornings he carries his daughter to town to see St. Paul's, and the Tower, and Westminster-abbey; and at night disgorges all he has seen, till we don't know the ace of spades from Queen Elizabeth's pocket-pistol in the Armoury. Mercy on us! And mercy on your Lordship too! Why should you be stunned with that alarum? Have you had your earthquake, my Lord? Many have had theirs. I assure you I have had mine. Above a week ago, when broad awake, the doors of the cabinet by my bedside rattled, without a breath of wind. I imagined somebody was walking on the leads, or had broken into the room under me. It was between four and five in the morning. I rang my bell. Before my servant could come it happened again; and was exactly like the horizontal tremor I felt from the earthquake some years ago. As I had rung once, it is plain I was awake. I rang again; but heard nothing more. I am quite persuaded there was some commotion; nor is it surprising that the dreadful eruptions of fire on the coasts of Italy and Sicily should have occasioned some alteration that has extended faintly hither, and contributed to the heats and mists that have been so extraordinary. George Montagu said of our last earthquake, that it was so tame you might have stroked it. It is comfortable to live where one can reason on them without dreading them! What satisfaction should you have in having erected such a monument of your taste, my Lord, as Wentworth Castle, if you did not know but it might be overturned in a moment and crush you? Sir William Hamilton is expected: he has been groping in all those devastations. Of all vocations I would not be a professor of earthquakes! I prefer studies that are *couleur de rose;* nor would ever think of calamities, if I can do nothing to relieve them. Yet this is a weakness of mind that I do not defend. They are more respectable who can behold philosophically the great theatre of events, or rather this little theatre of ours! In some ampler sphere, they may look on the catastrophe of Messina as we do on kicking to pieces an ant-hill.

Bless me! what a farrago is my letter! It is like the extracts of books in a monthly magazine! I had no right to censure poor Lord Northesk's ramblings! Lady Strafford will think he has infected me. Good-night, my dear Lord and Lady! Your ever devoted.

2259. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1783.

It is shameful, Madam, to keep a letter unanswered that came kindly to ask how I did ; but, good Lord ! I hate to write, when I have no other, no better topic than myself. My last was filled with nothing else ! for alas a day ! it is all I know ! and never was anything less worth knowing or repeating ! The sultry season did me a great deal of good and a great deal of harm. It agreed with me like a charm ; but the nights were so hot, that I left off or kicked off all covering, and first I caught the gout in my ankle, then the rheumatism in my shoulder, and so was exceedingly well, except that I could not move hand or foot. Still I love to have summer in summer, and as our doggest days never produce earthquakes nor make us swallow shoals of insects with every mouthful, I never complain of them—not but I do think I felt an earthquakeling a fortnight ago, between four and five in the morning, but it was a poor rickety thing, and could not have thrown down a house of cards. I hope the plague with which we are threatened *de par le Roi*, will prove as arrant a miscarriage. The Semiramis of the North, the devil take her, has fetched it to this side of the globe, and it may be added to the catalogue of her great exploits, which the French Academicians so much admire. I know the plague is not so horrid a thing as some people imagine—at least, Boccace chose such a period as a delicious one for telling stories. He makes a select company of young gentlemen and ladies shut themselves up in a country house, and relate novels to pass away the time, while all their relations and friends were swept away by cart-loads in the city.

Have you seen Lord Carlisle's tragedy,[1] Madam ? He has been so good as to send it to me. It has great merit ; the language and imagery are beautiful, and the two capital scenes are very fine. The story is Sigismonda and Guiscard, but he has much improved the conduct, and steered clear of the indelicacy and absurdity of the original, which did not stop Dryden, who, knowing that he could tell anything delightfully, did not mind what he told ; or how could he have thought of making an old king sleep behind a bed instead of upon it ? There are some parts that might be mended, and a situation or two too like what has been seen on the stage ; yet I am

[1] 'The Father's Revenge.'—Cunningham.

sure your Ladyship will admire most of it. Do not imagine that I am prejudiced by the compliment of its being sent to me. I have read it twice, carefully, and liked it better the second time than the first.

I hear often of Lady Chewton, and perfectly good accounts, but I have not seen her since the first week, for I should be burnt as black as an Etruscan vase, if I went to my house in Berkeley Square in this weather—no disrespect to this day se'nnight, surely, Madam, last Saturday was still nearer to the torrid zone. I begin to think that the Rumbolds and Co. have robbed the Indies of their climate as well as of their gold and diamonds, and brought it home in ingots. You hoped that Hyder Aly would have extirpated our banditti—do not fear, Madam; I believe it will not be long before we are outcasts, like the Jews, and become pedlars like them, up and down the earth, with no country of our own.

I saw Captain Waldegrave at Lady Chewton's, and he was quite recovered of his accident; but I know nothing of him since.

I must tell you an excellent reply of a person your Ladyship scarce knows, and I, not at all. Lord Lewisham[1] lately gave a dinner to a certain electoral prince [the Prince of Wales] who is in England, and at which *à la mode de son pays* they drank very hard. The conversation turned on matrimony: the foreign *altesse* said he envied the Dukes of Devon and Rutland, who, though high and mighty princes too, had been at liberty to wed two charming women whom they liked; but for his part he supposed he should be forced to marry some ugly German B——, I forget the other letters of the word—and then turning to the Irish Master of the Rolls [Rigby], asked what *he* would advise him to do? "Faith, sir," said the Master, "I am not yet drunk enough to give advice to a Prince of [Wales] about marrying." I think it one of the best answers I ever heard. How many fools will think themselves sober enough to advise his *altesse* on whatever he consults them!

A propos to matrimony, I want to consult your Ladyship very seriously: I am so tormented by droves of people coming to see my house, and Margaret gets such sums of money by showing it, that I have a mind to marry her, and so repay myself that way for what I have flung away to make my house quite uncomfortable to me. I am sure Lord Denbigh would have proposed to her had he known of her riches; and I doubt Margaret could not have resisted the temptation of being a Countess more than Lady Holford. She

[1] Son of the Earl of Dartmouth.—Cunningham.

certainly can never have a more disagreeable suitor: and therefore I grow every day more in danger of losing her and all her wealth. Mr. Williams [Gilly] said this morning that Margaret's is the best place in England, and wondered Mr. Gilbert[1] did not insist on knowing what it is worth. Thank my stars, he did not! Colonel Barré or Lord Ashburton[2] would propose to suppress housekeepers and then humbly offer to show my house themselves, and the first would calculate what he had missed by not having shown it for the last ten years, and expect to be indemnified; for virtue knows to a farthing what it has lost by not having been vice. Good night, Madam; my poor rheumatic shoulder must go to bed.

2260. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[3]

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 5, 1783.

Do not think, my best Lord, that I forget or neglect the very kind and favourite invitations from Nuneham, but I weigh my own incapacities, and how likely I am to be an incumbrance. The result of my meditations is, that, as I can neither entirely resign my own satisfaction, nor purchase it with clogging you and Lady Harcourt, nor abstain from visiting the additional beauties of Nuneham, before they are *in the sere and yellow leaf*, I have determined to offer myself in the beginning of September. In the morning I can drive out with you; and as the days will then be short, I shall not be the cause of your being in the house, and consequently can enjoy your company without having it on my conscience to have shortened your walks, in which I am not able to join. If this scheme will interfere with none of your Lordship's, you will be so good as to let me know your commands at your leisure.

By your note to Mrs. Clive, I learn that Miss Fauquier is with you, and Mr. Whitehead, and so I hope they will be in September if you admit me. Where Mr. Mason is, I am ignorant, which is pretty much the state of my intelligence about everybody and everything, except my own calamities, which consist in having had a little gout, and in having a little more rheumatism, from having been able to

[1] Mr. Gilbert, whose recent inquiries into Public Offices had led to the public discovery of the value of Walpole's Ushership of the Exchequer.—Cunningham.

[2] Barré had lately obtained a pension, and Dunning a lucrative sinecure.—Cunningham.

[3] Now first published.—Cunningham.

bear not so much clothing as our ancestor's old jacket or fig-leaf in the excessive heat, and from being overrun with all the languages of Babel, who come to see my house from morning to night.

Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me. [*Pope.*]

The Duc de Chartres was in my hall before I knew he was to come. Mons. de Guignes and La Tribu by candlelight, and the Chev. de Jerningham brought a host of Luxemburgs and Lusignans while I was at dinner, as Mr. Mason may have told you. Madame de Cambis dined with me last week, and who do you think came with her? *Diane de Poitiers* of the next reign. You will guess who I mean when I tell you she was a little embarrassed with sitting over against a picture that cost me more than three hundred *shillings*. Madame de Cambis, who is not yet deep in the Chronique Scandaleuse, telling me what and whom she had already seen, said, and "J'ai vû le —— de ——." I replied, without looking up, "Il est fort beau."

But let us change the subject. My niece Maria is extremely recovered, and Lady Chewton perfectly well. She has a fine little girl, and suckles it herself, and not at the commerce table. At Lady Cecilia's last week I saw Mr. and *Mrs.* Majendie. I hope your Lordship will be pleased to hear, if you do not know, that a friend of the husband had the good sense to pass eldest, and attend them to church, and now is reckoned to have made the match. To change the subject again: the Duke and Duchess are gone to Strasbourg, the Margravine being dying.

The Prince of Wales dined lately at Gunnersbury. Before they rose from table, Lady Clermont said, "I am sure the Duke of Portland is dying for a pinch of snuff," and pushed her box to him cross the Princess [Amelia], who said to her, "Pray, Madam, where did you learn that breeding? did the Queen of France teach it to you?"[1] These are the gossiping anecdotes our village affords, but they are better than news of burning towns and sinking ships.

I hope the Isis makes a little water in your Thames; ours, who is an old bachelor, and has no such conveniences, is as dry as a stick. We have no more verdure than there is in the Tuileries;—the evenings are delicious, but the nights are insupportable,—in short, one is never contented. However, one is very happy when one has no more terrible miseries, and one has very little to say when one talks

[1] Lady Clermont was often in Paris with her husband, an Irish peer, and was taken much notice of by the Queen of France. See Walpole's note on Letter to Mann, of 23rd January, 1783.—CUNNINGHAM.

of the weather and Princes and Princesses. Your Lordship probably thinks that I might have found that out two pages ago. I am to eat your Lordship's health at Clivden, in your own venison, at the end of the week, and to drink Miss *Pope's eye*, who is with them, and comforts them much under poor Mrs. Mestivyer's ramblings. Lady Jerningham is as deplorable; she was here one evening, and insisted that there was a woman in white in one of my trees! Alas! alas! if one does not force one's self to smile like Patience on a Monument, one should do nothing but meditate and sigh! I have mementos in every limb and every finger, but one has lived so long as I have with little reflection if one wants to be pulled by one's own sleeve to be put in mind of our nothingness! My letter is just a transcript of my mind, now and then pains, then foolish plagues, spirits, trifles, fooleries, pity and gloom; but it shall wear its holiday clothes at Nuneham, if you let me come thither, as I think you will. Some people invite me and press me, and I am haughty, and refuse, but at Nuneham I sue for admittance, and would fly thither if my wings were not pinioned, and the feathers battered and ruffled like those of a Shrove-tide cock.

Adieu, my dear Lord,
Your most devoted,
H. Walpole.

2261. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 15, 1783.

The address from the Volunteers is curious indeed, and upon the first face a little Irish. What! would they throw off our Parliament, and yet amend it? It is like correcting a question in the House of Commons, and then voting against it. But I suppose they rather mean to increase confusion here, that we may not be at leisure to impede their progress; at least this may be the intention of the leaders. Large bodies are only led by being in earnest themselves, when their leaders are not so: but my head is not clear enough to apply it to different matters, nor could I do any good if it were. Our whole system is become a disjointed chaos, and time must digest it, or blow it up shortly. I see no way into it, nor expect anything favourable but from chance, that often stops confusion on a sudden. To restore us by any system, it would require a single head furnished with wisdom, temper, address, fortitude, full and undivided power,

and sincere patriotism divested of all personal views. Where is that prodigy to be found? and how should it have the power, if it had all the rest? And if it had the power, how could it be divested of that power again? And if it were not, how long would it retain its virtues? Power and wisdom would soon unite, like Antony and Augustus, to annihilate their colleague virtue, for being a poor creature like Lepidus. In short, the mass of matter is too big for me: I am going out of the world, and cannot trouble myself about it. I do think of your part in it, and wish to preserve you where you are, for the benefits that you may contribute. I have a high opinion of Mr. Fox, and believe that by frankness you may become real friends, which would be greatly advantageous to the country. There is no competition in my mind where you are concerned: but Fox is the minister with whom I most wish you united,—indeed, to all the rest I am indifferent or adverse: but, besides his superior abilities, he has a liberality of acting that is to my taste; it is like my father's plainness, and has none of the paltry little finesses of a statesman.

Your parties do not tempt me, because I am not well enough to join in them: nor yet will they stop me, though I had rather find only you and Lady Aylesbury and Mrs. Damer. I am not seriously ill; nay, am better upon the whole than I was last year: but I perceive decays enough in myself to be sensible that the scale may easily be inclined to the worst side. This observation makes me very indifferent to everything that is not much at my heart. Consequently what concerns you is, as it has always been for above forty years, a principal object. Adieu!

2262. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 27, 1783.

I AM sorry to hear, my Lady, that the plague is broke *loose* in Bedfordshire; it has been here, and now rages much. I heard so many histories of it t'other night at Twickenham Park [Duchess of Montrose's], that recollecting I had eaten a vast deal of fruit, I stopped at the apothecary's as I came home, and made him give me a glass of peppermint-water. I don't know why I thought my own disorders preferable, or why one more should signify. I have a constant rheumatic fever every night, which ruins my sleep, though almost all I have lived upon for a century; but how can one talk of

one-self after you have told me such a tragical story! and when half Italy is smoking in ruins! Even my Lilliputian earthquake was true, for others felt it. I don't know how I missed seeing the meteor and its young ones, for I was sitting over against the window. We were better in our old-fashioned summers when sitting up to our knees in rain.

If your Ladyship makes apologies for writing of weather and epidemic illnesses from Bedfordshire, I ought to make them tenfold from Twickenham, where our old marketwomen used to have other commodities to traffic with; and yet I know no more than a county club—except that Crawfurd has been robbed in Oxford Road in a hackney-coach at ten at night. He lost twenty guineas and his pocket-book; and as he has always presence of mind enough to be curious,[1] Hare says that he said to the highwayman, "You must have taken other pocket-books: could not you let me have one instead of mine?"

I believe part of my fever is owing to being disturbed every morning. I do all I can to be forgotten, but my wicked house, like a fine tomb, draws crowds hither, without letting me rest in it. The complexion of my latter days is certainly not of the hue I proposed; it was not in my plan to live with Princes and Princesses, or to keep an inn. A Prince de Hessenstein has lately been to dine here. My first acquaintance with him was odd; he was then only called Count. The last time but one that I was at Paris, and with Madame du Deffand, they announced, as I thought, Monsieur le Count d'Estaing; I was rejoiced to see a man of whom I had heard so much. A *cordon bleu* entered. When he was gone I said he was a very different kind of man from what I had expected—"And what did you expect? and why did you expect anything?" said Madame du Deffand. I explained my reasons; she said this was not Count d'Estaing, but de Hessenstein, a natural son of the old King of Sweden—very well:—two years afterwards the same thing happened, and a different *cordon bleu* entered. Now I thought I was quite sure I had got the true *D'Estaing;* but lo! this second was another son of the same king; and this is he that has been here.

Since my letters are forced to live upon old stories, I will tell you another, Madam, that I had from Mr. Cambridge this morning. A Sir Blundel Carlton, as great a fool as the outset of his Christian name seemed to promise, was addressed for charity by an old woman

[1] Hence his name of *Fish* Crawfurd.—CUNNINGHAM.

who had nursed him. He would give her nothing. She urged her care and tenderness, and how well she had brought him up. He fell into a passion, and swore she had been his greatest foe. "They tell me," said he, "that I was the finest child in the world, and that you changed me at nurse."

I hope Lady Ella Fitzpatrick was a changeling too; I should be mortified to have had any genuine Fitzpatrick escape me, who have the honour of being genealogist to the family, and who have studied the MSS. of O'Bull King-at-Arms to the Milesian Monarchs, before they had any arms, or he could write or read. I beg George Selwyn would confine himself to his own province, and concern himself only with those upstarts, the Howards and Douglases,[1] and not meddle with the Fitzpatricks, who are so ancient that the best Irish antiquaries affirm that they reckoned many generations before the first man was created; but I will command my passion, lest I should not have a good night's rest.

2263. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday, Aug. 27, 1783.

THOUGH I begin my letter on and have dated it Sunday, I recollect that it may miss you if you go to town on Tuesday, and therefore I shall not send it to the post till to-morrow. I can give you but an indifferent account of myself. I went to Lord Dacre's; but whether the heat and fatigue were too much for me, or whether the thunder turned me sour, for I am at least as weak as small-beer, I came back with the gout in my left hand and right foot. The latter confined me for three days; but though my ankle is still swelled, I do not stay in my house: however, I am frightened, and shall venture no more expeditions yet; for my hands and feet are both so lame, that I am neither comfortable to myself or anybody else, abroad, when I must confine *them*, stay by myself, or risk pain, which the least fatigue gives me.

At this moment I have a worse embargo even than lameness on me. The Prince d'Hessenstein has written to offer me a visit—I don't know when. I have just answered his note, and endeavoured to limit its meaning to the shortest sense I could, by proposing to

[1] Alluding to Selwyn's favourites, Howard, Earl of Carlisle, and Douglas, Duke of Queensberry.—CUNNINGHAM.

give him a dinner or a breakfast. I would keep my bed rather than crack our northern French together for twelve hours.

I know nothing upon earth but my own disasters. Another is, that all yesterday I thought all my gold-fish stolen. I am not sure that they are not; but they tell me they keep at the bottom of the water from the hot weather. It is all to be ladled out to-morrow morning, and then I shall know whether they are gone or boiled.

Whenever the weather cools to an English consistence, I will see you at Park-place or in town; but I think not at the former before the end of next month, unless I recover more courage than I have at present; for if I was to get a real fit, and be confined to my bed in such sultry days, I should not have strength to go through it. I have just fixed three new benches round my bowling-green, that I may make four journeys of the tour. Adieu!

Monday morning.

As I was rising this morning, I received an express from your daughter [Mrs. Damer], that she will bring Madame de Cambis and Lady Melbourne to dinner here to-morrow. I shall be vastly pleased with the party, but it puts Philip and Margaret to their wit's end to get them a dinner: nothing is to be had here; we must send to Richmond, and Kingston, and Brentford. I must borrow Mr. [Welbore] Ellis's cook, and somebody's confectioner, and beg somebody's fruit, for I have none of these of my own, nor know anything of the matter; but that is Philip and Margaret's affair, and not mine; and the worse the dinner is, the more Gothic Madame de Cambis will think it.

I have been emptying my pond, which was more in my head than the honour of my kitchen; and in the mud of the troubled water I have found all my gold, as Dunning and Barré did last year.[1] I have taken out fifteen young fish of a year and a half old for Lady Aylesbury, and reserved them as an offering worthy of Amphitrite in the vase, in the cat's vase,[2] amidst 'the azure flowers that blow.' They are too portly to be carried in a smelling-bottle in your pocket. I wish you could plan some way of a waterman's calling for them, and transporting them to Henley. They have not changed their colour, but will next year. How lucky it would be, should you meet your daughter about Turnham Green, and turn back with them!

[1] In the preceding year, through the influence of Lord Shelburne, a considerable pension had been granted to Colonel Barré, and a peerage and pension to Mr. Dunning.—Wright.

[2] The china vase in which Walpole's favourite cat Selima was drowned.—Wright.

2264. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Aug. 27, 1783.

It is time to resume my veteran punctuality, and think of writing to you; but alas! correspondence, like matrimonial duty, is but ill performed when only prompted by periodic recollection of a debt to be paid. However, I am so far different from a husband, that my inclination is not decreased: want of matter alone makes me sluggish. The war is at an end, which, like domestic quarrels, animated our intercourse, and, like them, concludes with kissing, and is followed by dullness and inaction. The Definitive Treaty, they say, is signed; the French and we are exceedingly fond. Presents pass weekly between the Duchesses of Polignac and Devonshire; and so many French arrive, that they overflow even upon me, and visit Strawberry as one of our sights. The Marquise de la Jamaique, sister of your *Countess of Albany*,[1] has been here this month, and stays above another. But, are not such articles below even the ingredients of a letter; especially between you and me, who have dealt in the fates of kingdoms? If I would talk politics, I must have recourse to the long-depending topic, whether there will be a war between the Turks and Russians; of which, in good truth, I know as little as of anything else.

Sir William Hamilton is arrived, but I have not yet seen him. He will not be quite out of his element, for we have had pigmy earthquakes, much havoc by lightning, and some very respectable meteors.

I have not heard a syllable of Sharpe and Lucas. As it is vacation, I suppose even private justice cannot be administered out of term time. Pray, has Lord Orford ever paid you for his mother's tomb? I promised you to dun him if he did not, therefore empower me if he has neglected it.

I have not wherewithal to compose another paragraph, so this exordium must prove that I have not been negligent; but it must lie in my writing-box till I can collect something to fill up the remainder of the page—if I aimed at a third, I should not perhaps send it away before the Parliament meets.

[1] Wife of the son of the Duke of Berwick and Liria, and daughter of the Prince of Stolberg. Her sister was married to the Pretender, who called himself Prince of Albany, and then resided at Florence.—Walpole

Sept. 1.

I shall finish this letter, brief as it is; for I go to-morrow to Park-place and Nuneham for ten days. Mr. Fox has notified to the City, that the Definitive Treaties are to be signed the day after to-morrow by all parties but Holland: whether the latter is abandoned and pouts, or is reserved by France as a nest-egg for hatching a new war, I know not. Lord Shelburne, I suppose, will rave against the Ministers for having definished his treaties, since he cannot abuse them for not having terminated them; but I trust he will be little heeded.

They say there has been a dreadful hurricane and inundation at Surat. All the elements seem to be willing to make a figure in their turn. In our humble northern way we have had much damage by lightning. The summer has been wonderfully hot, and of late very unhealthy. Our globe really seems to be disordered. I have had my share in a rheumatic fever, which is not gone; but I hope change of air will cure it. In truth, I have no great faith in cures at my age for chronic complaints; but I try remedies, like people who go into lotteries, because they would not be out of fortune's way.

2265. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 30, 1783.

I HAVE been much afraid, my dear Lord, that I should be disappointed at last of the happiness of seeing Nuneham once more. I have been plagued with a rheumatic fever, which I began to think nothing would remove, and which destroyed my sleep and my spirits. It is much lessened within these few days, and as old folks should seize Time by the hind lock, leaving the fore one for the young, I am determined to wait on your Lordship on Wednesday or Thursday next, lest I should never have another opportunity, or should wait till I might say with Cardinal Wolsey, "Father Abbot, I am come to lay my *bones* amongst you." Indeed, I may always say that with propriety, for I bring nothing else but *bones*, and those aching.

I ought to thank your Lordship for the 'Catalogue' of Nuneham, but how can I thank you for what makes me blush? You have been pleased to record the silver pennies that I have presumed to

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

offer at your shrine, you that have loaded me with ingots! Fie on you!

Sir Edward says I shall be mighty happy with meeting my Lord of Orford, "who is often at Nuneham, for Lord Harcourt is very good to him." I smiled, and fear it was the only mark of joy I could bring myself to hang out.

Another of my *loyal* blood, who is with me, is to have Governor Johnstone and his wife to-morrow, to show my house to them. I said, "*You* may show it to them, to be sure, if you please, but I promise you *I* will not; *I* will not see Governor Johnstone."

A *friend* of the Governor and the Bishop (though I think one does not hear so much of the ——— friends lately), on a debate some days ago, whether convicts could not again be sent to Virginia, said, "Oh, I should like that; it is all the commerce I desire to have with America." No doubt; *commerce* with America was a terrible load, but we have happily got rid of it! I need not sign my name; I believe your Lordship would guess the writer by any paragraph in this letter.

2266. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1783.

I DOUBT my answers to your Ladyship's questions will be a little stale as well as unsatisfactory, for I have been absent eight days, in order to try change of air for my nightly fever. I began to fancy that Strawberry did not agree with me, and went to Park-place, but to no purpose; but to convince myself that if Twickenham does not suit me, no other *country* air is better, the only two good nights I have had these six weeks being two I passed in London. Nor is this the first experience I have had of the kind, as I never am out of order but I mend much sooner in town than anywhere else—no very grateful discovery, after having meant this place for my latter days, and trimmed it accordingly.

Be assured, Madam, that the story of the pocket-book was Mr. Hare's—at least not mine. He has a great deal too much wit for me to presume to deck myself in his plumes, I who am a jackdaw to him. Lady Di. told me the story. Of Sir Blundel I reported all I knew, and my author too. I almost wish you had not paid me with the catastrophe of Mrs. Hesse's family. I have lately heard but too many tragedies. Sir William Hamilton was at Park-place, and

gave us the full details of the Calabrian devastation, and more than he chose to insert in his book: of which one dreadful instance shall suffice:—Many crushed wretches perished, because the priests insisted on having the rubbish of churches removed first to deliver the consecrated wafers, who, they ought to have supposed, were capable of helping themselves.

I must be negative too, Madam, to all your other queries. I was not well enough to go to Lady Chewton's christening. I have not seen the Princess since her nephew [William IV.] dined with her, though like you I have heard how great a favourite he is. I know nothing of Mrs. Johnson's letter, nor of the mock royalty at Hatfield, but what you are so good as to tell me. George Lord Bristol used to play at drawing-rooms in the same manner at Ickworth, and ask if the parsons and neighbours loved walking or riding. I do not wonder that people are servile courtiers, when they delight in aping the insipidity of levées themselves. One must reverence an *ignis fatuus*, if one should be glad to be a glow-worm oneself.

There is little good that is new in Atterbury's pieces, Madam, as you have found yourself by this time. Blair's criticisms I have not seen; Beattie's nauseated me. Of the Dauphin's 'Life' I have not heard. Of the lives of abortive kings I had a surfeit, too, in Birch's 'Life of Prince Henry.' A Black Prince happens but once in a millennium.

As, at Park-place, I was within eighteen miles, I made a visit to Lord and Lady Harcourt, and was much pleased with poor Brown's alteration of the house and improvements of the place, as much as I could see of them, for there was such a tempest during the two days and a half that I was there, that I could stir out of the house but for one hour; but I went to my passion, Oxford, and saw Sir Joshua's 'Nativity.' But, alas! it is just the reverse of the glorious appearance it made in the dark chamber in Pall Mall. It is too high, the ante-chapel where it is placed is too narrow to see it but fore-shortened, and the washy Virtues round it are so faint and light, that the dark shepherds and *chiaro scuro*, that are meant to relieve the glory, child, and angels, obscure the whole. I foresaw long ago, that Jarvis's colours, being many of them not transparent, could not have the effect of old painted glass. Indeed, to see his window tolerably, I was forced to climb into the organ-loft, by such a pair of stairs, that, not having broken my neck, I can almost believe that I could dance a minuet on a horse galloping full speed,

like young Astley,—for I have seen young Astley, when I was in town last, and henceforth shall believe that nothing is impossible, nay, shall wonder if flying is not brought to perfection, and if Bishop Wilkins does not prove as great a prophet of arts as Sir Francis Bacon. How awkward will a dancer be, for the future, that has not consummate grace on a plain firm floor! But, though Mercury did not tread the air with more sovereign agility than the son, it was the father I contemplated with most admiration! What a being, who dared to conceive that he could make horses dance, and any horse dance, and that men, women, and children might be trained to possess themselves on, over, round the rapidity of two, three, four race-horses, and neither tremble for their necks, nor forget one attitude that is becoming! When he can collect whole troops of such agents, form and command them, I look on him with the reverence that I should have for the legislator of society in its infancy, for a Mango Capac or a Zoroaster. Dr. Franklin and Marshal Washington will sink in my esteem, if the Congress and the Colonies are not rendered as docile as Astley's Hounhyhnms. A master genius, I see can do anything. Impossibilities are difficulties only to those who want parts.

2267. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 10.

[This was only a note in the cover of a letter to be transmitted to Mr. Morice.]

Mr. Morice has written to me from Lausanne, which he was to leave at the beginning of this month for Naples, desiring to find a letter from me at Florence, with a state of the affairs of Cavalier Mozzi. I fear this will arrive too late. Should he be gone, you will be so good as to convey it to him wherever he is, or keep it for him should he not be arrived.

I do not know a tittle of news, but that the Peace arrived signed last Saturday. I have just seen Sir William Hamilton at General Conway's, and heard with great pleasure a most satisfactory account of you and your good looks and health. It is midnight, and this must go to town early to-morrow morning; and I am tired with writing to Mr. Morice, for I have the rheumatism in my right arm.

2268. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 12, 1783.

Your Lordship tells me you hope my summer has glided pleasantly, like our Thames. I cannot say it has passed very pleasantly to me, though, like the Thames, dry and low; for somehow or other I caught a rheumatic fever in the great heats, and cannot get rid of it. I have just been at Park-place and Nuneham, in hopes change of air would cure me; but to no purpose. Indeed, as want of sleep is my chief complaint, I doubt I must make use of a very different and more disagreeable remedy, the air of London, the only place that I ever find agree with me when I am out of order. I was there for two nights a fortnight ago, and slept perfectly well. In vain has my predilection for Strawberry made me try to persuade myself that this was all fancy; but, I fear, reasons that appear strong, though contrary to our inclinations, must be good ones. London at this time of year is as nauseous a drug as any in an apothecary's shop. I could find nothing at all to do, and so went to Astley's, which indeed was much beyond my expectation. I do not wonder any longer that Darius was chosen king by the instructions he gave to his horse; nor that Caligula made his consul. Astley can make his dance minuets and hornpipes; which is more extraordinary than to make them vote at an election, or act the part of a magistrate, which animals of less capacities can perform as dexterously as a returning officer or a Master in Chancery.—But I shall not have even Astley now: her Majesty the Queen of France, who has as much taste as Caligula, has sent for the whole *dramatis personæ* to Paris. Sir William Hamilton was at Park-place, and gave us dreadful accounts of Calabria: he looks much older, and has the bronze of a patina.

At Nuneham I was much pleased with the improvements both within doors and without. Mr. Mason was there; and, as he shines in every art, was assisting Mrs. Harcourt with his new discoveries in painting, by which he will unite miniature and oil. Indeed, she is a very apt and extraordinary scholar. Since our professors seem to have lost the art of colouring, I am glad at least that they have ungraduated accessors.

We have plenty and peace at last; consequently leisure for

repairing some of our losses, if we have sense enough to set about the task. On what will happen I shall make no conjectures, as it is not likely I should see much of what is to come. Our enemies have humbled us enough to content them; and we have succeeded so ill in innovations, that surely we shall not tempt new storms in haste.

From this place I can send your Lordship nothing new or entertaining; nor expect more game in town, whither nothing but search of health should carry me. Perhaps it is a vain chase at my age; but at my age one cannot trust to Nature's operating cures without aiding her; it is always time enough to abandon one's self when no care will palliate our decays. I hope your Lordship and Lady Strafford will long be in no want of such attentions; nor should I have talked so much of my own cracks, had I had anything else to tell you. It would be silly to aim at vivacity when it is gone: and, though a lively old man is sometimes an agreeable being, a pretending old man is ridiculous. Aches and an apothecary cannot give one genuine spirits; 'tis sufficient if they do not make one peevish. Your Lordship is so kind as to accept of me as I am, and you shall find nothing more counterfeit in me than the sincere respect and gratitude with which I have the honour to be your Lordship's most devoted humble servant.

2269. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 22, 1783.

You desired me to write to you if I heard any news, but though a letter appears, do not expect any novelty. I have not seen the shadow of a politician since my return, nor scarce any thing but rain, and my apothecary; and yet if the former has maintained my rheumatism, the latter has cured my nightly fever by the bark, on which I determined instead of James's powder, lest the latter should only make an exchange for the gout. The bark the very first night was as efficient as opium, and I now sleep almost as well as ever, which is like a dormouse.

I do not write to notify this important detail, though it is the total of my history; no, but I want to know how your pupil Mrs. Harcourt advances by your marriage of oil and water colours. Next, if it answers, I should be glad to have the receipt, that is, if you have no objection, and do not intend to keep your nostrum a

secret till you can announce the discovery to your own honour, not that I will rob you of it. I have two purposes to serve, one to communicate the process to Lady Di, the other to employ a painter to oil some of her drawings, if your method will do for that end, and will not hurt them; but I repeat that I do not desire you to acquaint me with the process if you have the least objection.

I do not know whether my nieces are yet arrived at Nuneham; in short, I am *d'une ignorance crasse!* and have been trifling entirely at home alone. I have given my 'Grammont' to Dodsley to be reprinted, which you will say is not much employment. Oh! but it is, and a disagreeable one too, for I correct the proof sheets, the most tiresome occupation either as editor or printer. Pray whisper to Lady Harcourt that she has not given me enough to occupy me in either capacity for a week, and that I beg she will bring me more to town before I begin.

I repeat a prayer of the same kind to you. First, as you are a poet, I must print something of yours; next, as you are a painter, I was so pleased with your altar-piece that I long to have a bit by your hand; why should you not execute a small piece, at least with your discovery! I should like it soon—if you ever did do anything soon, that I may insert it in the description of my collection which I am finishing, and for which all the plates are ready. Paint me any little scene out of your own *garden.* I wish I was worthy to ask for any piece of music composed by yourself for your other discovered marriage the Celestinette. However, as I do not want an ear so much but that I can celebrate a performer, I send you the following Epitaph, which I wrote three or four years ago, and found t'other day amongst some old papers. It was written at Lady Ossory's desire on her losing a favourite piping Bull-finch, which was buried under a rose-tree at Ampthill. The lines I think you never saw, and it is a great presumption to send poetry from the sexton of Parnassus to the high-priest; it is folly too to send such poetry from *Twitnam,* but it is your fault not mine if you carried off all Mr. Pope's inheritance, and left me as poor a bard as the bellman, *que voici.*

All flesh is grass, and so are feathers too:
Finches must die, as well as I or you.
Beneath a damask rose in good old age,
Here lies the tenant of a noble cage:
For forty moons he charm'd his lady's ear,
And piped obedient oft as she drew near,
Though now stretch'd out upon a clay-cold bier.

But when the last shrill flageolet shall sound,
And raise all dicky-birds from holy ground,
This little corpse again its wings shall prune,
And sing eternally the self-same tune,
From everlasting night to everlasting noon.[1]

When I send you these lines to prove that I do not totally want an ear, I put myself in mind of a story of Mr. Raftor, who, visiting a lady who never stirs out of London, and asking her if she never went into the country, she replied, "No; but I have lately got something *rural*, I have bought a cuckoo-clock."

2270. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1783.

THE last I heard of the plan of their Highnesses of Gloucester was, that they intended to winter in Provence: if they have changed their purpose, it is more than I know. The Churchills were delighted with Nancy; but then, I think, King Stanislas was living; now, I conclude, both Nancy and Luneville are fallen into the state of other little capitals that have become appendices to greater, are grown poorer, and keep up a melancholy kind of pride in lamenting the better days they remember. But, Madam, why are you inquisitive about Nancy? I fear you cast a look that way! I shall be very sorry! It is the sad lot of long life to outlive one's friends: but must I part with them before I go? Well, the less one has to regret, perhaps the easier is the passage; indeed, *my* pleasures are already not too ecstatic.

The bark, as your Ladyship says happened in your neighbourhood, did cure my fever, indeed like a spell; I took a dose but two hours before I went to bed, and yet slept all night. I cannot say my rheumatism is as tractable; it maintains its post like General Elliot, and I suppose will not remove till superseded by Governor Gout.

I never saw Apethorpe,[2] Madam, nor is your account inviting. Old mansions papered and laid open are like modern ancient ladies

[1] This is printed in Walpole's Works, vol. iv. p. 389, together with,—

On the other Bullfinch, buried in the same place.

Beneath the same bush rests his brother;
What serves for one will serve for t'other.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Lord Westmoreland's, in Northamptonshire.—CUNNINGHAM.

in *Polonoises* and with bare necks; they are neither respectable nor comfortable, but make one wish them demolished and changed for younger structures. The *façade* of Peterborough is noble, and in great taste; I have seen it twice.

I did not know who were the competitors for the vice-embassy: the papers named Mr. Storer. Mr. Gibbon, I heard, was going abroad for three years; but, as you see, Madam, I can only answer your questions by pleading ignorance, I should not be less informed if I lived in Siberia; nay, *there* new exiles would, at least, tell me what had passed since *my* time; but the strangers that visit my dwelling I do not even exchange a word with; and whatever the papers tell me rather creates in me disbelief. I remember how false they were when I lived in the world, and I have not yet fallen into that common practice of the ancient, to believe them only because I know nothing more true. Indifference and content I believe are, as well as age, the causes of my want of curiosity. I like the present Administration, and would not have it changed; but the humiliated state of this country makes me rather avoid all thoughts of politics. My English or selfish pride is mortified at seeing the decadence of our empire. While I was angry at the authors, resentment served for spirits—now I am numbed and careless.

Others, I find, have not contracted my torpor, nor is it natural that the young should. They seem as eager for honours as when we were at our meridian; but I could not help smiling at the King's showering Irish peerages. Is not it a little like the old Pretender comforting himself for the loss of a crown by bestowing pinchbeck coronets? I wish some of the engineers of the American war were to be created dukes of New England, and earls of Boston and Charleston; and that since they have been so unlike the Romans, who acquired the titles of Africani for conquering hostile countries, our Machiavels were to be denominated from the provinces that they have lost.

Have you seen Lord Aldborough's foolish and contemptible pamphlet, Madam? As his wife could not persuade me to print her father's works, and, though no peer, enrol him amongst the Noble Authors, I suppose she determined her lord should be one in spite of my teeth, and in spite of Nature's too. She is welcome, for I am out of the scrape; I keep no register of living scribblers. The sextons of next age may bury the dead of this.

2271. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1783.

Though I enclosed a letter to you for Mr. Morice about three weeks ago, I cannot pretend to have written to you since the 1st of September. The cause of my silence lasts still,—a total want of matter; and though my punctual conscience enjoins me to begin a letter to you, it will have a hard task to make me finish it. The Peace has closed the chapter of important news, which was all our correspondence lived on. My age makes me almost as ignorant of common occurrences as your endless absence has made you. I cannot concern myself in what people, who might be my grandchildren, do. The fatal American war has so lowered my country, that I wish to think of it as little as I do of the youth of the times. My common-sense tells me that I cannot belong to a new age; and my memory, that I did belong to a better than the present. Thus I interest myself in nothing; and whoever is indifferent, is ill qualified for a correspondent. You must make allowance for my present insipidity, in consideration of my past service. I have been your faithful intelligencer for two-and-forty years. I do not take my leave; but, in a dearth of events such as you would wish to know, do not wonder if my letters are less frequent. It would be tiresome to both to repeat that I have nothing to say. Would you give a straw to have me copy the 'Gazette,' which you see as well as I, only to tell you there are nine new Irish Lords and Ladies, of whom I never saw the persons of three?

I have complained to Mr. Duane of the indecent inaction of Sharpe and Lucas: he thinks it as extraordinary as I do, and has promised to reprove them.

Not being worth another paragraph in the world, I shall postpone my letter till next week, and carry it with me to town on Monday. Not that I expect to learn anything there or then. London is a desert the moment the shooting season begins, and continues so to the middle of November at least. In my younger days I have been very barren in autumn in time of peace.

Monday, 30th.

I have lately been putting together into a large volume a collection of portrait-prints of all the persons mentioned in the Letters of Madame de Sévigné; of whom for many years I have been amassing

engravings, and of whom I have got a great number. I wish, therefore, you would send me a single print, if you can procure a separate one, of the Great-Duchess, wife of Cosmo the Third, and daughter of Gaston Duke of Orleans, that absurd woman, of whom so much is said in the new History of the Medici. I have her amongst the other heads of the Medici, but do not care to mangle the set. You probably can obtain one from the engraver; but do not give yourself any trouble, nor pay a straw more than it is worth. If you obtain one, send it by any traveller coming to England. I trust you will have no occasion to send a courier. Let us rejoice, my dear sir, that you have no such occasion, and that I have so little to say. I hope we shall neither blunder into new matter, nor that our foregoing errors may be attended by new events? Never was my father's *Quieta non movere* established into a maxim that ought to be a lesson to politicians, so much as by the American war. It has *already* cost us our Colonies and doubled our debt.

Learning nothing in town, I send this away to prove to you that I have no disposition to relax our correspondence; but, as it is foolish to give only negative proofs, be assured, if my intervals are longer, that, like a good husband long married, my constancy is not impaired, though I may not be so regular in my demonstrations as formerly.

P.S. I have heard nothing of the 'Fatti Farnesiani.'

2272. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 9, 1783.

Madam my Lady, you have set me a task that poses me, and I must go and rub up my memory. No wonder I did not speak of the 'Walpoliana'—why, it is two or three years since it was printed, and I had quite forgot it. I saw it on a person's table, and was interrupted before I had finished the last two pages; I found it such a flimsy thing, that I never inquired after it more. I can now not recollect enough to give you much account of it. All I do recollect is, that I thought it like all the other water-gruel that Lord Hardwicke has published, only with this merit, that the former insipid messes were doled about in leaden kettles, and this is contained in a pewter firkin. It is told with the gossiping importance of an old

story-teller, who loves to repeat what he has seen or heard, without judging whether his anecdotes are worth hearing. The only passage of consequence that I remember is the manner of my father's getting the better of Lord Wilmington at the late King's accession;[1] and that is represented with the utmost ignorance of all the circumstances that made it curious.

If it was Lord Grantham that wanted to know my opinion, pray don't tell him how poor a dab I think it, for I like Lord Grantham, and do not want to acquaint him that I think, as he must do in his heart, that his papa is an old Goody, and never was any better—which he may not suppose; besides, the thing is a very harmless thing, and would really be very well for any old servant of my father to have written, who was proud of boasting of what his master had said to him or before him.

I rejoice to hear that your Ladyship's *Equipée* to Nancy is not determined; however, I will not lose my 'De Tristibus' that I had prepared on the occasion. I remember a Mr. Seward (father of the present muse of Lichfield[2]), who was travelling governor to Lord Charles Fitzroy, who, falling dangerously ill at Genoa, and being saved, as Mentor thought, by Dr. Shadwell, the governor whipped up to his chamber and began a complimentary Ode to his physician; but was called down before it was finished, on his pupil's relapse, who did die; however, the bard was too much pleased with the *début* of his poem to throw it away, and so finished it, though his gratitude had been still-born.

My lamentation is no ode; and though I hope its foundation will be still-born too, yet being perfected before I knew so much, you shall have it, as I believe it much superior to Mr. Seward's Pindaric. Mine is *Des Couplets*, in imitation of Monsieur de Coulanges, who had a marvellous facility of writing foolish songs and epigrams on any or no occasion, and I flatter myself that I have caught his manner very happily:—

I.

I love and hate Nancy,
Because my dear Nancy
Has taken a fancy
To leave me for Nancy.

[1] See vol. i. p. cxvi.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] The Rev. Thomas Seward, father of Anna Seward. See vol. iii. p. 163.—CUNNINGHAM.

II.

Mais puisque il est ainsi,
Je n'aimerai Nancy,
Que quand ma chere Nancy
Reviendra de Nancy.

III.

Till then I'll sob and sigh;
Unless that perchance I
Should find a new Nancy,
And then I will fancy,
That in her's I'm more dear than I was in my Ann's eye.

My dear old French woman [Madame du Deffand] would have asked me to what tune it was set, and would have insisted on my singing it. I should have told her to 'Colin's Complaint,' or 'All in the Downs;' and that though I could not sing, Mr. Crawfurd could, and then she would be charmed with it. If your Ladyship is not, I will make you amends by a story, with which I defy you not to be delighted.

At the neighbouring village of Teddington lives a Captain Prescott, who is not only a tar, but pitch and brimstone too. Two or three years ago (he is near fifty) he married a beautiful, sensible young woman, daughter of the minister of Portsmouth, who gave her 2500*l.* Trinculo soon used her inhumanly, beat her, had a child by her, thrashed her again:[1] she was again three months gone with child, and then he beat her so unmercifully, that a young footman who had lived five years with him, could not bear to be witness to so much brutality, left him, and has since lived a year with Mrs. Clive, who finds him the best servant she ever had. Poor Mrs. Trinculo's sufferings continuing, she resolved to run away, and by the footman's assistance did, and got to London. Her father and friends came up, and made her swear the peace against her husband. The cause was heard before Lord Mansfield. Mrs. Clive's servant was summoned as a witness. The Chief Justice asked him if he had not been aiding and abetting to his former mistress's escape. He said, Yes, he had. "You had!" said my Lord, "what, do you confess that you helped your master's wife to elope?" "Yes, my Lord," replied the lad, "and yet my master has never thanked me!" "Thanked you!" said Lord Mansfield, "thanked you! what, for being an accomplice with a wife against her husband?" "My

[1] "For love and war take turns, like day and night."—*Lothario.*—WRIGHT.

Lord," said the lad, "if I had not, he would have murdered her, and then he would have been hanged." The Court laughed, Lord Mansfield was charmed with the lad's coolness and wit, and if your Ladyship is not, I hope you will never hear anything better than M. de Coulanges's poetry.

P.S. I never saw the present Duc de Bouillon: I knew his wife, then Princesse de Turenne, a grave, sensible woman, who I believe is dead. I am glad when any French arrive and expose themselves here, that we may have something to set against all the articles that they can produce against our fools.

2273. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 11, 1783.

My rheumatism, I thank your Lordship, is certainly better, though not quite gone. It was very troublesome at night till I took the bark: but that medicine makes me sleep like opium. But I will say no more about it, nothing is so troublesome as to talk of chronical complaints: has one any right to draw on the compassion of others, when one must renew the address daily and for months?

The aspect of Ireland is very tempestuous. I doubt they will hurt us materially without benefitting themselves. If they obtain very short parliaments, they will hurt themselves more than us, by introducing a confusion that will prevent their improvements. Whatever country does adopt short parliaments, will, I am entirely persuaded, be forced to recur to their former practice; I mean, if the disorders introduced do not produce despotism of some sort or other. I am very sorry Mr. Mason concurs in trying to revive the Associations. Methinks our state is so deplorable, that every healing measure ought to be attempted instead of innovations. For my own part, I expect nothing but distractions, and am not concerned to be so old. I *am* so old, that, were I disposed to novelties, I should think they little became my age. I should be ashamed, when my hour shall come, to be caught in a riot of country 'squires and parsons, and haranguing a mob with a shaking head. A leader of faction ought to be young and vigorous. If an aged gentleman does get an ascendant, he may be sure that younger men are counting on his exit, and only flatter him to succeed to his influence, while they are laughing at his misplaced activity. At least, these would

be my thoughts, who of all things dread being a jest to the juvenile, if they find me out of my sphere.

I have seen Lord Carlisle's play,[1] and it has a great deal of merit —perhaps more than your Lordship would expect. The language and images are the best part, after the two principal scenes, which are really fine.

I did, as your Ladyship knows and says, always like and esteem Lady Fitzwilliam. I scarce know my lord; but, from what I have heard of him in the House of Lords, have conceived a good opinion of his sense: of his character, I never heard any ill; which is a great testimonial in his favour, when there are so many horrid characters, and when all that are conspicuous have their minutest actions tortured to depose against them.

You may be sure, my dear Lord, that I heartily pity Lady Strafford's and your loss of four-legged friends. Sense and fidelity are wonderful recommendations; and when one meets with them, and can be confident that one is not imposed upon, I cannot think that the two additional legs are any drawback. At least I know that I have had friends who would never have vexed or betrayed me, if they had walked on all fours.

I have no news to send your Lordship; indeed, I inquire for none, nor wish to hear any. Whence is any good to come? I am every day surprised at hearing people eager for news. If there is any, they are sure of hearing it. How can one be curious to know one does not know what; and perpetually curious to know? Has one nothing to do but to hear and relate something new?—And why can one care about nothing but what one does not know? And why is every event worth hearing, only because one has not heard it? Have not there been changes enough? divorces enough? bankruptcies and robberies enough? and, above all, lies enough?—No; or people would not be every day impatient for the newspaper. I own, I am glad on Sunday when there is no paper, and no fresh lies circulating. Adieu, my good Lord and Lady! May you long enjoy your tranquillity, undisturbed by villany, folly, and madness!

[1] 'The Father's Revenge.'—CUNNINGHAM

2274. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 18, 1783.

I NEVER think myself in the wrong in writing nonsense. Sense seldom turns to any account, especially to a writer. Your Ladyship strengthens me in my opinion. I sent you some exceedingly foolish rhymes, and they produced very pretty ones in return, and full of meaning. Do you think I will not adhere to my tenet? I only write this to thank you, not to *agacer* you again. I have nothing to say; and our correspondence shall lie dormant, if you please, till I have something to tell you that you might not hear otherwise. I will answer your question on omens, and bid you good night.

Omens I do not pretend to explain, and for this very good reason, that I cannot expound that which you have sent me. If they have any mean*ing*, they must have had a mean*er*; now, if the meaner does not speak to be understood, I take him to be a very silly agent, and I conclude so the more, because the silliest persons are those who guess his meaning; as Charles II. said of a fool,[1] who was a popular preacher in his own parish, "I suppose his nonsense suits their nonsense." But, though I cannot guess the meaning of a thing without meaning, I can easily tell how Lady Grantham would interpret the omen, for a silly ugly prude must know what she would do, if she were her grandmother's picture, and could do the only thing that can be in a picture's power, tumble down, when your Ladyship was present. I have a female relation, who is a mighty dealer in those winks which she thinks Providence tips her upon every occasion; and, though they never come to pass, she does not suspect that Providence is making a fool of her—or rather made her so once for all. I wonder I am not a greater adept at interpretation, as she has told me what everything in the world *signifies*, except itself, for expounders of prophecies never allow a prognostication to have any first meaning, though always a second.

I came to town on Wednesday, to get rid of a rheumatic fever, which had returned with more violence—and I have found the

[1] Woolley, afterwards Bishop of Clonfert. The saying is related by Burnet (i. 449, Ed. 1823)—is used before by Walpole in a letter to Mann of 31st July, 1762, (vol. iv. p. 8,) and afterwards told to Pinkerton, who has inserted it in his 'Walpoliana,' vol. i. p. 58.—CUNNINGHAM.

nostrum succeed. It is most unfortunate for me, but I am convinced that country air is too sharp or too damp for me. If I am in the least out of order, I cannot recover but in London. It is, at this moment, a most unpalatable medicine; I have nowhere to go, and have sat almost alone for the whole four days. I shall return to Strawberry on Monday, and then settle here at the very beginning of next month. Mr. Selwyn comes on Tuesday.

P.S. I direct this to Ampthill, as I conclude, if you are not there, it is less likely to miscarry, than if it went to Farming-Woods, and should not find you there.

2275. TO LADY BROWNE.

Berkeley Square, Oct. 19, 1783.

As it is not fit my better-half should be ignorant of the state of her worse-half, lest the gossips of the neighbourhood should suspect we are parted; let them know, my life, that I am much better to-day. I have had a good deal of fever, and a bad night on Wednesday; but the last was much better, and the fever is much diminished to-day. In short, I have so great an opinion of town-dried air, that I expect to be well enough to return to Twickenham on Monday; and, if I do, will call on you that evening; though I have not been out of my house yet. Indeed, it is unfortunate that so happy a couple, who have never exchanged a cross word, and who might claim the flitch of bacon, cannot be well—the one in town, the other in the country.

2276. TO GOVERNOR POWNALL.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 27, 1783.

I AM extremely obliged to you, Sir, for the valuable communi cation made to me.[1] It is extremely so to me, as it does justice to a memory I revere to the highest degree; and I flatter myself that it would be acceptable to that part of the world that loves truth; and that part will be the majority, as fast as *they* pass away who have

[1] The Governor's 'Character of Sir Robert Walpole.' It will be found among the original papers in Coxe's Life of Sir Robert.—WRIGHT. See Letter to Cole of 8th Jan. 1773, in vol. v. p. 425.—CUNNINGHAM.

an interest in preferring falsehood. Happily, truth is longer-lived than the passions of individuals; and, when mankind are not misled, they can distinguish white from black. I myself do not pretend to be unprejudiced; I must be so to the best of fathers: I should be ashamed to be quite impartial. No wonder, then, Sir, if I am greatly pleased with so able a justification; yet I am not so blinded, but that I can discern solid reasons for admiring your defence. You have placed that defence on sound and *new* grounds; and, though very briefly, have very learnedly stated and distinguished the landmarks of our constitution, and the encroachments made on it, by justly referring the principles of liberty to the Saxon system, and by imputing the corruptions of it to the Norman. This was a great deal too deep for that superficial mountebank, Hume, to go; for a mountebank he was. He mounted a system in the garb of a philosophic empiric, but dispensed no drugs but what he was authorised to vend by a royal patent, and which were full of Turkish opium. He had studied nothing relative to the English constitution before Queen Elizabeth, and had selected her most arbitrary acts to countenance those of the Stuarts: and even hers he misrepresented; for her worst deeds were levelled against the nobility, those of the Stuarts against the people. Hers, consequently, were rather an obligation to the people; for the most heinous part of despotism is, that it produces a thousand despots instead of one. Muley Moloch cannot lop off many heads with his own hands; at least, he takes those in his way, those of his courtiers: but his bashaws and viceroys spread destruction everywhere. The flimsy, ignorant, blundering manner in which Hume executed the reigns preceding Henry VII., is a proof how little he had examined the history of our constitution.

I could say much, much more, Sir, in commendation of your work, were I not apprehensive of being biassed by the subject. Still, that it would not be from flattery, I will prove, by taking the liberty of making two objections; and they are only to the last page but one. Perhaps you will think that my first objection does show that I am too much biassed. I own I am sorry to see my father compared to Sylla. The latter was a sanguinary usurper, a monster; the former the mildest, most forgiving, best-natured of men, and a *legal* minister. Nor, I fear, will the only light in which you compare them, stand the test. Sylla resigned his power voluntarily, insolently; perhaps timidly, as he might think he had a better chance of dying in his bed, if he retreated, than by continuing to rule by force. My father

did not retire by his own option. He had lost the majority of the House of Commons. Sylla, you say, Sir, retired unimpeached; it is true, but covered with blood. My father was not *impeached*, in our strict sense of the word; but, to my great joy, he was in effect. A Secret Committee, a worse inquisition than a jury, was named; not to try him, but to sift his life for crimes: and out of such a jury, chosen in the dark, and not one of whom he might challenge, he had some determined enemies, many opponents, and but two he could suppose his friends. And what was the consequence? A man charged with every state crime almost, for twenty years, was proved to have done—what? Paid some writers much more than they deserved, for having defended him against ten thousand and ten thousand libels, (some of which had been written by his inquisitors,) all which libels were confessed to have been lies by his inquisitors themselves; for they could not produce a shadow of one of the crimes with which they have charged him! I must own, Sir, I think that Sylla and my father ought to be set in opposition rather than paralleled.

My other objection is still more serious; and if I am so happy as to convince you, I shall hope that you will alter the paragraph; as it seems to impute something to Sir Robert, of which he was not only most innocent, but of which, if he had been guilty, I should think him extremely so, for he would have been very ungrateful. You say he had not the comfort to see that he had established his own family by anything which he received from the gratitude of that Hanover family, or from the gratitude of that country, which he had saved and served! Good Sir, what does this sentence seem to imply, but that either Sir Robert himself, or his family, thought or think, that the Kings George I. and II., or England, were ungrateful in not rewarding his services? Defend him and us from such a charge! He nor we ever had such a thought. Was it not rewarding him to make him Prime Minister, and maintain and support him against his enemies for twenty years together? Did not George I. make his eldest son a peer, and give to the father and son a valuable patent place in the Custom-House for three lives? Did not George II. give my elder brother the Auditor's place, and to my brother and me other rich places for our lives; for, though in the gift of the First Lord of the Treasury, do we not owe them to the King who made him so? Did not the late King make my father an Earl, and dismiss him with a pension of 4000*l.* a-year for his life? Could he or we not think these ample rewards? What

rapacious sordid wretches must he and we have been, and be, could we entertain such an idea? As far have we all been from thinking him neglected by his country. Did not his country see and know these rewards? and could it think these rewards inadequate? Besides, Sir, great as I hold my father's services, they were solid and silent, not ostensible. They were of a kind to which I hold your justification a more suitable reward than pecuniary recompenses. To have fixed the House of Hanover on the throne, to have maintained this country in peace and affluence for twenty years, with the other services you record, Sir, were actions, the *éclat* of which must be illustrated by time and reflection; and whose splendour has been brought forwarder than I wish it had, by comparison with a period very dissimilar! If Sir Robert had not the comfort of leaving his family in affluence, it was not imputable to his King or his country. Perhaps I am proud that he did not. He died forty thousand pounds in debt.[1] That was the wealth of a man that had been taxed as the plunderer of his country! Yet, with all my adoration of my father, I am just enough to own that it was his own fault if he died so poor. He had made Houghton much too magnificent for the moderate estate which he left to support it; and, as he never—I repeat it with truth, *never*—got any money but in the South Sea and while he was Paymaster, his fondness for his paternal seat, and his boundless generosity, were too expensive for his fortune. I will mention one instance, which will show how little he was disposed to turn the favour of the Crown to his own profit. He laid out fourteen thousand pounds of his own money on Richmond New Park. I could produce other reasons too why Sir Robert's family were not in so comfortable a situation, as the world, deluded by misrepresentation, might expect to see them at his death. My eldest brother had been a very bad economist during his father's life, and died himself fifty thousand pounds in debt, or more; so that to this day neither Sir Edward nor I have received the five thousand pounds a-piece which Sir Robert left us as our fortunes. I do not love to charge the dead; therefore will only say that Lady Orford (reckoned a vast fortune, which till she died she never proved,) wasted vast sums; nor did my brother or father *ever* receive but the twenty thousand pounds which she brought at first, and which were spent on the wedding and christening; I mean, including her jewels.

[1] The very sum that Sir Robert gave for his collection of pictures.—Cunningham.

I beg pardon, Sir, for this tedious detail, which is minutely, perhaps too minutely, true; but, when I took the liberty of contesting any part of a work which I admire so much, I owed it to you and to myself to assign my reasons. I trust they will satisfy you; and, if they do, I am sure you will alter a paragraph against which it is the duty of the family to exclaim. Dear as my father's memory is to my soul, I can never subscribe to the position that he was unrewarded by the House of Hanover.

2277. TO GOVERNOR POWNALL.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 7, 1783.

You must allow me, Sir, to repeat my thanks for the second copy of your tract on my father, and for your great condescension in altering the two passages to which I presumed to object; and which are not only more consonant to exactness, but, I hope, no disparagement to the piece. To me they are quite satisfactory. And it is a comfort to me too, that what I begged to have changed was not any reflection prejudicial to his memory; but, in the first point, a parallel not entirely similar in circumstances; and, in the other, a sort of censure on others to which I could not subscribe With all my veneration for my father's memory, I should not remonstrate against just censure on him. Happily, to do justice to him, most iniquitous calumnies ought to be removed; and then there would remain virtues and merits enough, far to outweigh human errors, from which the best of men, like him, cannot be exempt. Let his enemies, ay, and his *friends* be compared with him, and then justice would be done! Your essay, Sir, will, I hope, some time or other, clear the way to his vindication. It points out the true way of examining his character; and is itself, as far as it goes, unanswerable. As such, what an obligation it must be to, Sir, &c.

2278. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 8, 1783.

I AM glad to have heard from you at last. I thought you had dropped me; which would be a little unkind, as, perhaps, I may not long be *a charge* to any body. I have scarce enjoyed two days of health together since I saw you. My rheumatism is not gone, and a sciatica finding how many of the family were established with me came to join its cousins. In short, my decay wears as many countenances as life itself does. I break very sensibly to myself in every respect—but enough of that.

Your committee I should not have named if you did not. When I found we differed in opinions, I said no more. That you should be tired of them does not surprise me: it is what I foresaw would happen. I have had much more practice of that sort than you. I have been acquainted with Parties all my life, and at times have been far engaged in them. I will tell you a reflection I made in 1766: *that it is vexatious even to govern fools: and as vexatious not to have fools enough to govern,*—which perhaps may be your case. I told you truly above a year ago, that I would meddle no more with politics: and I have adhered to my resolution. I saw a moment (which I had long despaired of seeing arrive) thrown away by the treachery of Lord Shelburne, and I had not youth or spirits to recommence the pursuit. After that, when his folly had done mischief to his country and but momentary good to himself, I saw that two parties being split into three factions, it must happen that two of them would unite; and it was indifferent to me whether North, Mansfield, and Loughborough, or Thurlow, Dundas, Jenkinson, and Shelburne were to be adopted—so that coalition for coalition, one is as bad as the other. As I have no views to serve, no personal resentments to gratify, I cannot embrace either division, when all were equally guilty, except that I think worst of the traitor, who prevented the good that might have been done a year and a half ago, and who broke the former Opposition to pieces. I must die consistent as I have lived, and cannot bring myself to say that either half of the criminals deserved to be hanged, and the other half to be pardoned.

But do you know that I suspect your having a graver reason than you mention for being disgusted? Indeed, I flatter myself you

had, as in that offence I should heartily concur with you: it is on a point in which we have ever agreed. You cannot approve a corre spondence with a Popish army; you cannot believe that an army of 40,000 men, 30,000 of whom are Papists, are fit instruments to reform a Protestant constitution, to establish liberty, or to protect the property of Protestants to which Roman Catholics think they have a better title. You, whose sentiments of him I know, cannot *coalesce* with the prelatic Earl [Hervey, Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry], nor wish success to a toleration which you so much condemned, which was devised by the Court, and was infused into our friends, and is at this moment loudly avowed and encouraged by one of whom I am sure you do not think well. No change of times or persons, no heterogeneous commixture of the partisans that lead factions, can authorise or justify an adoption of Catholics into civil Government. This has ever been—ever will be my ruling principle. Papists and liberty are contradictions, and so, I fear, it will too soon appear!

When I am in so grave a strain, I will pass to the latter part of your letter before I reply to other passages in the former part. You amaze me by even supposing that the Epitaph I sent you could allude to the immortality of the soul. Believe me, I think it is as serious a subject as you do, nor, I am sure, did you ever hear me treat it lightly. The three last lines, which justly offended you, if you so interpreted them, were intended to laugh at the absurd idea of the beatified sitting on golden thrones, and chanting eternal Allelujahs to golden harps. When men ascribe their own puerile conceptions to the Almighty Author of all things, what do they but prove that their visions are of human invention? What can be more ridiculous than to suppose that Omnipotent Goodness and Wisdom created, and will select the most virtuous of its creatures to sing his praises to all eternity?—it is an idea that I should think could never have entered but into the head of a King, who might delight to have his courtiers sing Birth-Day Odes for ever.

Pray be assured that I never trifle on so solemn and dear an interest as the immortality of the soul; though I do not subscribe to every childish and fantastic employment that silly people have chalked out for it. There is no word in any language expressive enough for the adoration and gratitude we owe to the Author of All Good! An eternity of praises and thanks is due to Him; but are we thence to infer that *that* is the sole tribute in which he will delight, and the sole occupation he destines for beings on whom he has bestowed

thought and reason ? The Epitaph did not deserve half a line to be said on it; but your criticism, indeed your misconception of it, will excuse my saying so much in my own justification.[1] It is no irreligion to smile at a chorister's notions of Paradise. Perhaps I, on my side, may have misunderstood you too—forgive me if I have; but you do not seem so serious on the Tragedy you have been writing as I wish you were. I shall be very glad if you was in earnest. One of my most fervent wishes has long been that you would exercise more frequently the *verve* that is so eminently marked as your characteristic talent: your neglect of it is one of my quarrels to your Association. Ten thousand and ten thousand reasons forbid your rising to illustrious fame as secondary leader of a County meeting; you have but to shut the door of your room and take your pen and choose your place on Parnassus.

I will dispense with your improving painting and music, and *àpropos*, I thank you very much for your receipt, and ten times more for the hopes you give me of a picture by your hand; in short, I may be an officious, nay, impertinent zealot, but I am jealous of every thing that intercepts your renown. I have that partiality for a genuine and original genius that I cannot bear its turning to the right or left. To *invent* in the arts as you have done in both those I have mentioned, is no deviation, but new proofs of genius. It is none when you tell me I have an ear, alas! it is what I most sensibly felt I want, but I shall not talk on so poor a subject as myself, and you may be sure I am sincere, by my worship of Gray and you. Only men who feel their own inferiority are enthusiasts to others.

Thank you for your corrected Epitaph, and pray tell me more of your Tragedy.

P.S. In looking again at your letter, I find you are to be at York on Tuesday, 11th, consequently will set out on the 10th, and then this might not find you at Aston or York, if directed to the one or the other; therefore, as it contains nothing that will not keep cold, I shall not despatch it till Monday, when it is sure of finding you resident at York.

[1] This portion of the letter was printed by Miss Berry in Walpole's Works, vol. iv. p. 390, as a note to the Epitaph.—CUNNINGHAM.

2279. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 8, 1783.

I DOUBT, Madam, that when I do go to Strawberry, I shall not be able to discover the lady who owns the tree and five of hearts. It seems to be a German coat-of-arms, and my heraldry does not extend so far. If I knew the name of the village where the building, that sounds, as if designed for a chapel, stands, one may perhaps find some mention of it in Dugdale or Tanner.

My rheumatism and its appendages are much better, thank your Ladyship, for the warm atmosphere of London. They made me afraid to venture to Mrs. Hobart's play, for though I have always been brave about the gout, the rheumatism has made me a great coward. The first goes when it has had its swing, and does not return, till, like a comet, it has made its revolution. The other may never leave one, or come back the day after it has disappeared; however, as mine seems to be put upon the establishment, I shall talk no more of it.

The town is so empty, or rather I have lost so many of my acquaintance, that I have scarce seen anybody since I came. I have not heard a word of Lord Spencer's will, nor of the relict, but that she is retired to St. Alban's.

My chief entertainment has been in reading the mutual philippics of Messrs. Flood and Grattan, who, if you believe their accounts of each other, are *very honourable men.* There is a little book which you would not read if you could, called 'Elegantiæ Latini Sermonis.' Hibernian elegance is not a whit behind it in displaying naked truth, though of another kind. Well! I am very glad there is so much animosity amongst them: alas! for these eight or ten years one has been forced to wish for mischief lest worse mischief should happen. In short, I have found out that the love of one's country makes one a wicked animal, and hope for plagues in all the rest of the world!

Would not one think, Madam, that there was evil enough toward, and that quiet I might escape in the hurlyburly? Yet, this morning at breakfast, I was saluted with the first scene of my old tragedy, all sugared over with comfits like a twelfth-cake. I have been writing to Mr. Woodfall, to beg to buy myself out of his claws, and to lecture him for his gross compliments. I have ever laughed when

I have seen little men called *great*, and I will not bear to be made ridiculous in the same way.

I fear you will hear melancholy accounts of poor Lady W., but it is not a subject for a letter.

You say, *we* shall be found at Ampthill till after Christmas, probably. I am very sorry for it, though a little comforted by the *probably*, which at least is not a definitive term. The long evenings before Christmas are just the time when I most wish your Ladyship here, as then one can have a little society without a mob. In spring everybody is running after everybody, or waiting till supper-time for those they expect to dinner. Though you say *we*, I depend on seeing our Lord next week, and though I hope his individuality will not be absolutely necessary, yet surely the more numerous the appearance the better. Nay, I should hope your Ladyship's zeal would rather accompany him, than keep a drawback to Ampthill. It is in every light so serious a moment, that I could almost chide you for having philosophy enough to look at it from a distance. I who hang but by a thread, and from whom no threads hang, could not be so indifferent.

2280. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 10, 1783.

If I consulted my reputation as a writer, which your Lordship's partiality is so kind as to allot me, I should wait a few days till my granary is fuller of stock, which probably it would be by the end of next week; but, in truth, I had rather be a grateful, and consequently a punctual correspondent, than an ingenious one; as I value the honour of your Lordship's friendship more than such tinsel bits of fame as can fall to my share, and of which I am particularly sick at present, as the 'Public Advertiser' dressed me out t'other day with a heap of that dross, which he had pillaged from some other strolling playwrights, who I did not desire should be plundered for me.

Indeed, when the Parliament does meet, I doubt, nay hope, it will make less sensation than usual. The orators of Dublin have brought the flowers of Billingsgate to so high perfection, that ours comparatively will have no more scent than a dead dandelion. If your Lordship has not seen the speeches of Mr. Flood and Mr.

Grattan,[1] you may perhaps still think that our oyster-women can be more abusive than members of Parliament.

Since I began my letter, I hear that the meeting of the delegates from the Volunteers is adjourned to the first of February. This seems a very favourable circumstance. I don't like a reformation begun by a Popish army! Indeed, I did hope that peace would bring us peace, at least not more than the discords incidental to a free government: but we seem not to have attained that era yet! I hope it will arrive, though I may not see it. I shall not easily believe that any radical alteration of a constitution that preserved us so long, and carried us to so strong a height, will recover our affairs. There is a wide difference between correcting abuses and removing landmarks. Nobody disliked more than I the strides that were attempted towards increasing the prerogative; but as the excellence of our constitution, above all others, consists in the balance established between the three powers of King, Lords, and Commons, I wish to see that equilibrium preserved. No single man, nor any private junto, has a right to dictate laws to all three. In Ireland, truly, a still worse spirit I apprehend to be at bottom; in short, it is frenzy or folly to suppose that an army composed of three parts of Catholics can be intended for any good purposes.

These are my sentiments, my dear Lord, and, you know, very disinterested. For myself, I have nothing to wish but ease and tranquillity for the rest of my time. I have no enmities to avenge. I do hope the present Administration will last, as I believe there are *more* honest men in it than in any set that could replace them, though I have not a grain of partiality more than I had for their associates. Mr. Fox I think by far the ablest and soundest head in England, and am persuaded that the more he is tried the greater man he will appear.

Perhaps it is impertinent to trouble your Lordship with my creed, it is certainly of no consequence to anybody; but I have nothing else that could entertain you, and at so serious a crisis can one think of trifles? In general I am not sorry that the nation is most disposed to trifle; the less it takes part, the more leisure will the Ministers have to attend to the most urgent points. When so many

[1] "This alludes to the celebrated altercation, in which Flood called Grattan 'a mendicant patriot, who had sold his country for prompt payment,' and Grattan retorted on Flood as an ill-omened bird of prey, with *broken beak* and cadaverous aspect, &c. Flood's nose was disfigured, which occasioned the allusion to the broken beak." *Croker, MS.*—CUNNINGHAM.

individuals assume to be legislators, it is lucky that very few obey their institutes.

I rejoice to hear of Lady Strafford's good health, and am her and your Lordship's most faithful humble servant.

2281. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 12, 1783.

I HAVE been longer than usual without writing to you, my dear Sir; but so I told you in my last it was possible I should be. Had I written sooner, I could only have made excuses for having nothing to say. I have now the satisfaction of telling you that the political horizon is much cleared, and discovers a more serene prospect. The Parliament met yesterday, and the address to the King was voted without a negative. The threatened Opposition is disjointed, and half of its expected leaders did not appear. The late *ridiculous* Minister, Lord Shelburne (which is using the most favourable of all the epithets he deserves), keeps in the country. Lord Temple made a speech in the Lords which nobody minded or answered; and Mr. William Pitt in the Commons behaved with candour and great decency. Mr. Fox shone with new superiority; but even masterly eloquence is not his first quality. All his conduct is manly, and marked with strong sense, and first-rate common sense, which is the most useful of all. In short, he has *that*, and frankness and firmness, and the utmost good humour; and therefore you will not wonder I am partial to him, and think him the only man I have seen who unites all those qualities like my father. I wish he may be Minister as long—which is a very disinterested wish at my age. I don't believe you suspect that it is interested for any part of the term.

The preliminaries with Holland are signed; nay, Ireland seems to be coming to its senses. One thing they have taken from us and improved, which I do not envy,—Parliamentary scurrility. Mr. Grattan, their late idol, and Mr. Flood (who, they say, might be the idol of Indians, who worship the powers that cannot do most mischief,) have called one another as many foul names as Scaliger and Scioppius used to throw in Latin at the heads of their adversaries. It is a pity that one of them at least did not reserve a few for the Count-Bishop, whom you have seen in Italy, and who seems to have conceived there a passion for a red hat. Is not it odd

to see an Emperor demolishing convents in the East, and a Protestant Bishop pleading for Popery in the West? His son has been as eccentric in a smaller line here, as you may have seen in the papers.

This is a slight sketch of public affairs: private news I have none. I now come to Cavalier Mozzi.

Ten days ago Mr. Duane told me that Sharpe and Lucas would be ready in a few days to lay the result of their most tedious consultation before us; and that he believed the upshot would be, that they would think we ought to allow *five* thousand pounds to my Lord. I smiled, and said to myself, "They needed not to have taken five or six months to agree on an opinion which they might have delivered in five minutes, for it is precisely what both had settled long ago my Lord should have." Sharpe said at first, that my Lord and Mozzi should divide the money in question, which he called ten thousand; and Lucas above a year ago, I think I told you, told an impatient creditor of my Lord, that his Lordship would get *five* thousand from Cavalier Mozzi. However, I said nothing then, reserving my reflection for a moment when it may come with more force. Nay, I even commanded myself this morning, when Lucas was with me, and produced their liquidated states, by which those honest men allot 5457*l.* to my Lord. But my indignation took its revenge; for, on Lucas telling me that there was still *one* point on which Sharpe and he could not agree, which was on interest upon interest for arrears of my Lady's jointure, and which was originally founded on an iniquitous parallel demand which had been allowed by a villany of old Cruwys, Lucas's predecessor, by which my father's creditors were defrauded of 18,000*l.*, I broke out, called Cruwys all the rascals he deserved [not meaning to except his successor], and told him, that even if Mozzi's claim should not be allowed, the money ought not to go to my Lord, but to the creditors. At last I said plainly, that Mr. Duane and I were not at all bound to submit to his and Sharpe's opinion, but ordered them to deliver their reasons to us in writing; and that, for my part, I would lay those reasons before Lord Camden, for being no lawyer myself, I would be justified by having the opinion of one of the first lawyers in England for the judgment I should pronounce. This, I trust, will make him less flippant. He had begun by saying, Mr. Duane and I would be able to decide in a few minutes; which was pretty impudent, considering that even he and Sharpe do not agree on one point: but I repeated that we should not have such implicit faith; we had only desired to know on what points *they*

did agree. Upon the whole, I fear this affair will not be so soon concluded. Nay, I perceive so much roguery, that, as I cannot unravel it, I shall be very unwilling to pronounce; being persuaded that Cavalier Mozzi will be cheated. Lucas pretended just now to have found but yesterday a scrap of paper *without a title*, that proved, under the hand of Lady Orford's steward, that she had received more from her jointure than was pretended. I asked him in a very severe tone where he had found that bit of paper. He said, amongst my Lord's writings. I replied, it was very extraordinary that he, who for so many years had been poring over my Lord's writings, should never have taken notice of that paper before;—nor do I conceive how a paper of my Lady's steward came there! In a word, I told Lucas plainly that all he had said to-day had confirmed me much more strongly in what I thought before of Cruwys's villany, and of the justness of the arguments I had used to show that what had been deemed law for my brother ought to be law for Lady Orford, and that what a jury had given to one ought to be given by a jury to the other. This he owned; but said, the money ought to go to my Lord as executor. "If it does," said I, "will my Lord pay to the creditors?" He replied, "I suppose he will: he has paid much more to them." I could have answered, "Much less than he ought."—Oh! my good Sir, do you wonder, after all I have seen, that I have a dismal opinion of the three professions—lawyers, clergy, and physicians? 'Tis well I am come to the bottom of my paper, or I should continue invectiving.

2282. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Nov. 21, 1783.

I AM exceedingly hurt to be forced to tell you, that I shall not be able to do so much service to Cavalier Mozzi as I hoped; nor should I have it in my power to do any, if I threw up my refereeship, as I have been on the point of doing: but I will tell you methodically, and as shortly as I can, what passed yesterday. The three lawyers came to me. As soon as Lucas had opened the points on which Sharpe and he are agreed, and by which they give a balance to my Lord of 5457*l.*, I said with all the sneer I could put into a look, "It was unlucky, gentlemen, that you flung away six months to compute what you guessed so exactly a year and a half ago! You both said, *so long* ago, that my Lord would or ought to have five thousand

pounds." Lucas understood me; but I afterwards made *him* understand a great deal more, which I will not repeat now. We then came to the point of interest, on which he and Sharpe still disagree, and by which Lucas would extort 1900*l.* for my Lord. Sharpe did behave handsomely, and would have set it *all* aside. I then spoke, and called on Lucas to acknowledge that I at first declared in writing to my Lord that I would not undertake the office of umpire, unless I were allowed to act as a gentleman, and not as a lawyer. [This Lucas could not deny.] I then stated all the Cavalier's handsome behaviour. I appealed to Sharpe, who knew all, whether I could be partial to my Lady and her friend. [This Sharpe allowed.] I said, I had accepted the office only to save her honour and my Lord's from being bandied about in a public court of justice; out that since I found that the law was stretched to the utmost against Cavalier Mozzi, and as I was unwilling to pronounce against my Lord, whose side I was to maintain, or to be thought partial for him, I chose to throw up my trust, and leave the whole to be decided at law. I was then silent for some minutes. At last Mr. Duane spoke, and said, that Mr. Sharpe and Mr. Lucas had agreed on the 5457*l.*, and that he and I during the former discussions had in general allowed their several demands; and that we had allowed very liberally to my Lord. Lucas interrupted him, and would not acknowledge that we had allowed *liberally* to his Lordship; but both Duane and Sharpe insisted we had. Mr. Duane then proposed to Lucas to desire my Lord to give up the interest to Cavalier Mozzi, which would be 1900*l.*, and would, by so much, lessen the 5457*l.* Lucas said very awkwardly, he would, and was sure my Lord would agree to anything; but seemed exceedingly dissatisfied. Sharpe and Lucas then took their leave; and Duane was going, but I kept him, and beseeched him to tell me honestly what I ought to do. I should tell you that Sharpe had proposed to give up the interest on both sides. Mr. Duane said that he advised me by all means not to leave the affair undecided; that it must then go to Chancery, where it would not be decided in a dozen years, or perhaps not in twenty;—that Cavalier Mozzi would lose the whole interest of all the money in the mean time, and perhaps spend the principal in the pursuit; that it had always been his practice to advise adverse parties to split the difference; and therefore, of the 1900*l.*, he would give my Lord half, and Mozzi half. I did not like this. At last I proposed my Lord should have 600*l.*, and the Cavalier the remaining 1300*l.* I found Mr. Duane did not like this.—In short,

we agreed at last that my Lord should have 6400*l.*, and Cavalier Mozzi the rest; and this he would go and offer to Sharpe. Thus, after all, of 10,500*l.*, the sum in dispute, I shall save Cavalier Mozzi but 4100*l.*! You will say, I had better have let Lucas go and propose to my Lord to cede the 1900*l.* It is true; but, besides that Lucas accepted the request so unwillingly, and not in a way to satisfy my Lord, I could not satisfy myself without talking to Mr. Duane alone; and, when I did, I found him so clear in what I ought to do, that I could not, from inclination to serve Cavalier Mozzi, do what would be injustice to my Lord, whose cause I was chosen to defend. In short, I am very unhappy, and shall not wonder if at last Cavalier Mozzi suspects I have acted a double part; and have, notwithstanding all my professions, only meant to hurt him. Lucas, I am sure, still thinks just the contrary; at least, that I have been partial *against* my nephew: no; yet against Lucas I have, whom I did reproach with instigating my Lord to contest his mother's will, after he had said he would not. I do not care what my Lord or Lucas think; I have strictly followed Mr. Duane's opinion; and, as *he* could have no partiality, I chose to prefer his opinion to my own, as his could have no bias. Whatever Cavalier Mozzi shall think, it is mortification enough to me to be outwitted by Lucas; but I could not suffer my wish of defeating him to supersede what I am told is justice.

I have attempted to carry a collateral point, in which I suppose I shall not be much more successful. In Lucas's warmth of pleading for my Lord, I discovered that the 6000*l.* which my Lord is likely to recover from Mozzi (for observe, nothing is yet decided,) ought to go to my brother's creditors, and can only be received by my nephew as executor. I pinned Lucas down to this confession; and both the other lawyers agreed I was in the right. I then wanted to have the 6000*l.* deposited in the hands of trustees or a banker: but that, it seems, is not law; my Lord indeed being answerable for the money to the creditors, but nobody has a right or power to sequester it from him. However, when the decision shall be made, I shall declare to Lucas that I shall give my brother's creditors notice that there is such a sum, which they may claim.

I have thus told you the substance, and you may inform poor Mozzi of it. I will write again when I know any farther. I have done the best I could, and perhaps more than any one else could have done; yet I claim no merit. All evidence, except what little was in Sharpe's hands, was in Lucas's, and he has certainly made the most

of it. Had I not been present, who bore witness against him in some particulars of his own knowledge, I conclude he would have gained more from Mr. Duane, who, as a lawyer, must be a little biased by law arguments; yet I believe, though I explained much to him, that his love of peace, and the disagreeable consequences he foresaw from a legal suit, chiefly influenced his judgment. I have not room or time to add a word more.

Nov. 25, after dinner.

P.S. As I was going to seal my letter, I received one from Mr. Duane, which obliges me to add a postscript. He says, that Mr. Sharpe has convinced him by arguments, which I have not time to particularise, that Cavalier Mozzi ought to have more than we had allotted to him. [This shows Sharpe has not quite sacrificed his client;—indeed, I have always specified every instance in which I thought he acted justly.] Mr. Duane therefore advises to let Lucas make the proposal above-named to my Lord, and wait his answer. If it is not favourable, he says we may then offer 5600*l.*, or at least enlarge it. I certainly agree to wait, and willingly; but I send my letter notwithstanding: though you need not read the particulars to Cavalier Mozzi yet. It is hard to be a judge in a law affair, of which I am no judge. I have acted throughout from good-nature to Cavalier Mozzi, whom I thought ill-treated; and, to avoid scandal, I have done the best I could. I have made Lucas my enemy more than he was before, and I have not managed him; though I do not doubt but he will represent my conduct to my Lord in the worst light; and, though Mozzi may suspect me of favouring my nephew, I have probably added new alacrity to the wretches who wish my Lord to disinherit me, should I outlive him,—but that is certainly what I do not expect to do; and, when I have scorned to court him for them, be assured I would not flatter him at the expense of another In short, I have done right to the best of my judgment, and cannot help what is thought of me.

2283. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 2, 1783

We have not yet terminated poor Cavalier Mozzi's business. Lucas is highly dissatisfied at our offering my Lord what he calls *but* 6000*l.*, and I am as much displeased at offering so much; but Mr. Duane thinks the 5457*l.* must be allowed, though Lucas, I

believe, would find it very difficult to prove so in a court of law: and, as we fear we must agree to divide the remaining 1800*l.* in question, we probably shall be reduced to fix the whole sum for my Lord at 6400*l.*, as I told you in my last. At present we wait for an answer from Cavalier Mozzi to Mr. Sharpe's last, and expect it in a week. Upon the whole, I shall have done sadly; and at best shall only have saved him from an eternal suit in Chancery.

Your nephew is in town, but confined by the gout. I called on him, but did not see him; yet you may be very easy, for he expects to be abroad in a day or two. I can make you as easy about another point, too; but, if you have not learnt it from him, do not take notice to him that you know it. Mrs. Noel has informed me that his daughter's treaty of marriage is broken off, and in a fortunate way. The peer, father of the lover, obliged *him* to declare off; and Mrs. Noel says that your niece is in good spirits. All this is just what one should have wished. Your nephew has sent me a good and most curious print from you of the old Pretender's marriage: I never saw one before. It is a great present to my collection of English portraits. The Farnesian books I have not yet received, and have forgotten the name of the gentleman to whom you entrusted them, and must search among your letters for it; or, tell it me again.

The politicians of London, who at present are not the most numerous corporation, are warm on a bill for a new regulation of the East Indies, brought in by Mr. Fox. Some even of his associates apprehended his being defeated, or meant to defeat him; but his marvellous abilities have hitherto triumphed conspicuously, and on two divisions in the House of Commons he had majorities of 109 and 114. On *that* field he will certainly be victorious: the forces will be more nearly balanced when the Lords fight the battle; but, though the Opposition will have more generals and more able, he is confident that his troops will overmatch theirs; and, in Parliamentary engagements, a superiority of numbers is not vanquished by the talents of the commanders, as often happens in more martial encounters. His competitor, Mr. Pitt, appears by no means an adequate rival. Just like their fathers, Mr. Pitt has brilliant language, Mr. Fox solid sense; and such luminous powers of displaying it clearly, that mere eloquence is but a Bristol stone, when set by the diamond Reason.

Do not wonder that we do not entirely attend to things of earth: Fashion has ascended to a higher element. All our views are

directed to the air. *Balloons* occupy senators, philosophers, ladies, everybody. France gave us the *ton;* and, as yet, we have not come up to our model. Their monarch is so struck with the heroism of two of his subjects who adventured their persons in two of these new *floating batteries,* that he has ordered statues of them, and contributed a vast sum towards their marble immortality. All this may be very important: to me it looks somewhat foolish. Very early in my life I remember this town at gaze on a man who *flew down* a rope from the top of St. Martin's steeple;[1] now, late in my day, people are staring at a voyage to the moon. The former Icarus broke his neck at a subsequent flight: when a similar accident happens to modern knights-errant, adieu to air-balloons.

Apropos, I doubt these new kites have put young Astley's nose out of joint, who went to Paris lately under their Queen's protection, and expected to be Prime Minister, though he only ventured his neck by dancing a minuet on three horses at full gallop, and really in that attitude has as much grace as the Apollo Belvedere. When the arts are brought to such perfection in Europe, who would go, like Sir Joseph Banks, in search of islands in the Atlantic, where the natives have in six thousand years not improved the science of carving fishing-hooks out of bones or flints! Well! I hope these new mechanic meteors will prove only playthings for the learned and the idle, and not be converted into new engines of destruction to the human race, as is so often the case of refinements or discoveries in science. *The wicked wit of man always studies to apply the result of talents to enslaving, destroying, or cheating his fellow-creatures.* Could we reach the moon, we should think of reducing it to a province of some European kingdom.

5th.

P.S. The Opposition in the House of Commons were so humbled by their two defeats, that, though Mr. Pitt had declared he would contest every clause (of the India bill) in the committee, (where in truth, if the bill is so bad as he says, he ought at least to have tried to amend it,) that he slunk from the contest, and all the blanks were filled up without obstruction, the opponents promising only to resist it in its last stage on Monday next; but really, having no

[1] On the 1st of June, 1727, one Violante, an Italian, descended head-foremost by a rope, with his legs and arms extended, from the top of the steeple of St. Martin's church, over the houses in St. Martin's Lane, to the furthest side of the Mews, a distance of about three hundred yards, in half a minute. The crowd was immense, and the young princesses, with several of the nobility, were in the Mews.—Wright.

hopes but in the House of Lords, where, however, I do not believe they expect to succeed. Mr. Pitt's reputation is much sunk; nor, though he is a much more correct logician than his father, has he the same firmness and perseverance. It is no wonder that he was dazzled by his own premature fame; yet his late checks may be of use to him, and teach him to appreciate his strength better, or to wait till it is confirmed. Had he listed under Mr. Fox, who loved and courted him, he would not only have discovered modesty, but have been more likely to succeed him, than by commencing his competitor. But what have I to do to look into futurity?

2284. TO SIR HORACE MANN.[1]

Dec., 1783.

Rasserena il mesto ciglio; non è ver: there have been no *tumults* in Ireland; and I write again so soon to dissipate your alarm. I do not tell you that there have not been bad *designs* on foot. Ambitious and disappointed incendiaries have been at work, and had raised a spirit which might have given trouble; but their views were too obvious, and could not have taken place without producing such danger as could not fail to strike all who have sense, honesty or property. The two Houses of Parliament have acted with the highest integrity, wisdom, firmness, and dignity. They would not endure a Congress of Delegates from an armed multitude nosing them in their legislative capacity, but peremptorily refused to listen to their demands; declared against any alteration of the Constitution, and announced a resolution of maintaining the King's title with their lives and fortunes; and, indeed, if they would not risk their lives in its defence, they would have risked their own fortunes.

The mimic Congress were abashed, closed their session, and voted a most loyal, decent, modest Address to the King; and it is to be brought over by Mr. Flood, who has been a principal engine of confusion, but who probably did not wish, or mean to go so far as that mitred Proteus, the Count-Bishop,[2] who, I dare say, would be glad of a red hat, and whose crimes you are infinitely too charitable in not seeing in the blackest light; nor can they be palliated, but by his profligate folly. In truth, his extravagant indecency has been as

[1] Now first published. Endorsed "Not finished, nor sent."—Cunningham.
[2] Frederick Hervey, Earl of Bristol, and Bishop of Derry —Cunningham.

serviceable to the Government, as overwhelming to himself. His immorality, martial pretences, and profaneness, covered him with odium and derision. Blasphemy was the puddle in which he washed away his episcopal Protestantism, though, perhaps, he flatters himself that as Episcopacy is deemed an indelible character, he shall be *admitted ad Eundem* (as they say at Cambridge and Oxford) into the Church of Rome. Do you know that this champion of liberty was so violent an anti-American, that when last at Paris, he was so abusive on Dr. Franklin and the Colonies, that he was ordered to depart on pain of the Bastile? His brother-Proteus, Lord Shelburne, would last year have sent him to Versailles to make the peace, but the indignity he had received thence, rankled in his heart, and he refused; or, to be a peace-maker, was too much in the character of a Bishop, for such a *Bishop* to accept! The mission of his daughter,[1] and the circumstances, are just as you have heard them. You may add, that though the daughter of an Earl in lawn sleeves, who has an income of four or five and twenty thousand a-year, he suffers her from indigence to accept 300*l.* a-year as governess to a natural child.[2] Last year, he let his own house in St. James's Square for the usurious rent of 700*l.* a-year, and without acquainting his Countess, who is a very respectable woman. I tell you these things for your information and for your private ear, that you may keep an eye on the negotiations of such a detestable character. But do not mention them, as it would be guessed whence you received them. I do not love to spread scandalous histories, though strictly true, and notorious both here and in Ireland, where a much longer and more bitter account of this new Alberoni has been published. If your *Neighbour*[3] conceives hopes from this Legate, or from higher or more dexterous friends, he will end life as he began it, in disappointment. But that the Bras Cassé should pity him, I do not wonder. An usurper must feel for the descendant of a punished tyrant—perhaps, he *more* than pities. Your nephew carried your letter whither you desired, and I have since given a comment to it from what you said to me, which you will perceive I understood, and shall turn to your advantage.

[1] Lady Elizabeth Foster.—CUNNINGHAM.
[2] Daughter of the Duke of Devonshire, by Miss Spencer.—CUNNINGHAM.
[3] The Pretender.—CUNNINGHAM.

2285. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON

Dec. 3, 1783

I CAN give you no clearer proof of my inclination to please you than by writing at present, when I have no inclination for it myself. It is not from bad health, for I recovered it as soon as I came to town, the smoke of London agreeing better with me than keeping sheep on my hillock; but what can I write? Chaos, you say, is come again: yes, truly; and Pope might add:

> Joy to great Chaos! let division reign!

but I have no joy in such confusions as are occasioned by heraldic *counter-changes*. It is playing at chess after jumbling all the pieces in a bag and placing them on the board indiscriminately, without separating the black from the white. Was I in the wrong to say that Lord Shelburne had disordered all system? Here are the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt in the arms of Jenkinson, and Lord Bute and Lord Mansfield in Opposition. Unravel and arrange all this if you can. I know but one way, which is to overlook the performers and adhere to the cause, and then you will discern the principles which have for ever produced parties. I mean the true, which being the true, are always assumed, though the Professors may mean nothing but themselves. So much for politics, which I should quit gladly, had I anything more amusing, or indeed anything else to tell you. It is scarce worth repeating, that a person was with me yesterday who is concerned in a new and more compendious way of printing. He told me he had sent his plan to, and then waited on, a quondam friend of yours, a certain *toaster*, who only said to him drily, "Why did you send your book to me? I know nothing of printing."

Yes! Yes! I have a better story for you. Washington has instituted a new military order, called of Cincinnatus. He sent it to La Fayette. The Parisians cried, "*Diable St. Senatus, voilà un plaisant Saint! qui est ce qui en a jamais entendu parler.*" The *Devots* recurred to *les Vies des Saints*, and finding no such Apostle in the Church's red book, they are very angry with Washington for encroaching on the Pope's prerogative of creating Peers of the Upper House. For my part I think they attributed a much better

Patron to the new order, than the pedantic one that Washington elected; nay, and tallying much better. A senate, like many of the beatified, may set out very debauched and repent at last, and cast up its vomit and die a martyr at its *dissolution*.

I now come to the pleasantest part of your letter, your Tragedy. I rejoice that you are in earnest, and shall detest your tooth-ache or any associable twitches still more if they interrupt the completion. I interest myself zealously in the dignity of your genius, and wish you always to maintain, never to profane it. I do not mean that you should always be climbing the heights of Parnassus. You may sport in a valley with no less grace, but I will not allow you to hunt at Finsbury with Lord Mayors and Aldermen. Tragedy is worthy of you, yet why care whether your buskins would pass muster before a jury of French shoemakers? Do you want a licenser to usher your piece to the press with a "*par ordre de M. le garde des Sceaux j'ai lu cette tragedie et je n'y ai rien trouvé qui doit en empêcher l'impression* (*La Harpe*)."

Don't make it too horrid neither, that it may be licensed at Athens. I was glad to plead the atrociousness of the one stage to shelter myself from the impertinent delicacy of the other; but I shall indulge *you* in no extremes. You possess the whole art and can do what you please; can touch a precipice, and glide down so imperceptibly that your descent shall appear natural and easy; while we, the less skilful, neither know how we got up nor how to come down: and then assure folks that certain Greeks two thousand years ago broke their necks with as little address, and were mightily admired for it. I require a perfect Tragedy at your hands with no excesses in the construction, for all the rest I am in no pain; nor should be on that head had you not alarmed me. Mrs. Siddons, whom I have seen again, and like much better, though in that detestable play 'The Gamester,' shall do you justice, and Lord Harcourt will be in the third heaven between her and you. Good night.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, Dec. 25, 1783.

I REMEMBER when the Coalition was first promulged, I began a letter to you with "Chaos is come again," but now amid this wreck of "political elements" and crush "of East India Worlds" I will content myself with merely wishing you a merry Christmas, which I should wish to enjoy myself, if a teazing toothache would suffer me so to do. Under such a malady I trust you will forgive my late silence, and (calling it a judgment on me for my epistolary offences, give me your absolution.

Now that you have lain aside writing me political news, I am as much out of the

2286. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 11, 1783.

Your Lordship is so partial to me and my idle letters, that I am afraid of writing them; not lest they should sink below the standard you have pleased to affix to them in your own mind, but from fear of being intoxicated into attempting to keep them up to it, which would destroy their only merit, their being written naturally and without pretensions. Gratitude and good breeding compel me to make due answers; but I entreat your Lordship to be assured, that, however vain I am of your favour, my only aim is to preserve the honour of your friendship; that it is all the praise I ask or wish; and that, with regard to letter-writing, I am firmly persuaded that it is a province in which women will always shine superiorly; for our sex

basket as a York Alderman; and as the late wonderful event in the House of Lords has not induced you to take up your pen, I conclude I must not expect any more entertainment from you of that sort. You have however a hundred other topics constantly at hand, and therefore I shall hope for an answer to this much sooner than I deserve to receive it.

I either expressed myself very ill or you greatly misunderstood my meaning about your bird Epitaph, but it is not now worth while to resume the subject, only so far as to say I am not sorry you misconceived me, since it produced from you so excellent a paragraph relating to your own creed on that important subject.

I was really serious when I told you that I was writing a Tragedy. I completed the first sketch during the month I was at Aston, and since I came here have written the first two acts, in spite of a hundred associating impediments which came upon me whether I would or no, and I fully hope to finish the whole while I stay here, if no general election should take place, in which case I must attend to the calls of friendship, but to no other; my story is an Indian[1] one partly feigned, and what probably would appear too horrid on the stage. My aim in writing it is to show that the unities may be preserved even to French exactitude, and yet the whole afford sufficient interest, incident, and variety. I wish however you would not mention what I am about except to Lord Harcourt or Mr. Stonhewer, who both know it.

Having nothing more to say, I must repeat my wish to hear from you soon, and if you only tell me that you keep free from your too frequent winter visitor I shall be satisfied. Believe me, dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

W. Mason.

[1] 'The Indians,' a tragedy, in five acts. "The scene," he writes, "of this play lies in Zaragua, one of the five kingdoms in the isle of Haiti, afterwards called by the Spaniards Hispaniola. The destruction of this kingdom (on which this tragedy is founded) happened in the year 1505, the year when Isabella, the wife of Ferdinand, of Spain, died, and about thirteen years after Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of the New World, first landed on the island." Mason also privately printed, at York, 'Œdipus,' a tragedy, in five acts, begun by the late William Whitehead, Esq., Poet-Laureate, and finished by W. Mason, M.A.—Mitford.

is too jealous of the reputation of good sense, to condescend to hazard a thousand trifles and negligences, which give grace, ease, and familiarity to correspondence. I will say no more on that subject, for I feel that I am on the brink of a dissertation; and though that fault would prove the truth of my proposition, I will not punish your Lordship only to convince you that I am in the right.

The winter is not dull or disagreeable: on the contrary, it is pleasing, as the town is occupied on general subjects, and not, as is too common, on private scandal, private vices, and follies. The India Bill, air-balloons, Vestris, and the automaton, share all attention. Mrs. Siddons, as less a novelty, does not engross all conversation. If abuse still keeps above par, it confines itself to its prescriptive province, the ministerial line. In that walk it has tumbled a little into the kennel. The low buffoonery of Lord Thurlow, in laying the caricature of the Coalition on the table of your Lordship's House, has levelled it to Sadler's Wells; and Mr. Flood, the pillar of invective, does not promise to re-erect it;[1] not, I conclude, from want of having imported a stock of ingredients, but his presumptuous debut on the very night of his entry was so wretched, and delivered in so barbarous a brogue, that I question whether he will ever recover the blow Mr. Courtenay gave him. A young man may correct and improve, and rise from a first fall; but an elderly formed speaker has not an equal chance. Mr. Hamilton,[2] Lord Abercorn's heir, but by no means so laconic, had more success. Though his first essay, it was not at all dashed by bashfulness; and though he might have blushed for discovering so much personal rancour to Mr. Fox, he rather seemed to be impatient to discharge it.

Your Lordship sees in the papers that the two Houses of Ireland have firmly resisted the innovations of the Volunteers. Indeed, it was time for the Protestant proprietors to make their stand; for though the Catholics behave decently, it would be into their hands that the prize would fall. The delegates, it is true, have sent over a most loyal address; but I wish their actions may not contradict their words! Mr. Flood's discomfiture here will, I suppose, carry him back to a field wherein his wicked spirit may have more effect.

[1] "Mr. Flood certainly failed in the English House of Commons: 'an old tree,' as his great rival said of him, 'does not bear transplanting.'" *Croker, MS.*—Cunningham.

[2] John James Hamilton. In 1789 he succeeded his uncle as ninth Earl of Abercorn and second Viscount Hamilton, and, in 1790, was created Marquis of Abercorn [died 1818].—Wright.

It is a very serious moment! I am in pain lest your county, my dear Lord (you know what I mean), should countenance such pernicious designs.

2287. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 15, 1783.

I WRITE you in great haste a few lines, which will surprise and perplex you, as I cannot enter into any explanation.

The town is full of rumour of a change of Administration. No such thing has happened; but enough has happened at least to countenance such a report. You will be cautious, therefore, till you hear farther, what you write. Mention no politics, but to the Ministers, as you ought to do.

Everything goes as well as possible in Ireland. You are much too candid when you impute no bad designs to the person[1] whose speech has been Italianised.

I have received the two books of Caprarola from Lord Algernon Percy: I had quite forgotten to whom you had consigned them. It is not a way of speaking, but I do insist on your letting me know what they cost, that I may pay your nephew. You would deprive me of the pleasure of troubling you now and then with a little commission, if you do not let me reimburse you. I shall employ Sir W. Hamilton in that way, if you forbid my applying to you; which you will do effectually, if you do not send me the prices of the 'Fatti Farnesiani.'

No answer is come yet to Sharpe from Cavalier Mozzi.

Tuesday, 16*th.*

An event has now happened that is decisive. The Ministers were beaten last night in the House of Lords by eight votes on the India Bill.[2] *An Administration beaten* often implies *a Court beaten;* at present, the reverse is true. It is not proper to say more: but,

[1] Dr. Hervey, Bishop of Derry, and Earl of Bristol. He had sent to Rome a speech he had made in favour of the Roman Catholics: it was translated into Italian, printed, and dispersed.—WALPOLE.

[2] The King had sent for Lord Temple, and ordered him to declare that His Majesty did not approve of the India Bill, but wished to have it thrown out by the House of Lords; yet he had never signified that disapprobation to the Duke of Portland and the ministers. He went farther, and commanded the lords of the bedchamber to vote against it.—WALPOLE.

as our newspapers seldom leave anything unexplained, though commonly falsified or blundered, you will not remain long in the dark. Adieu!

2288. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Friday, Dec. 19, 1783.

I HAVE only a moment's time to tell you, that, at *one* this morning, His Majesty sent to Lord North and Mr. Fox for their seals of Secretary of State. It is said that Mr. Pitt is to be First Lord of the Treasury, and that the Parliament will be dissolved immediately. I know nothing more. You will learn the new arrangements from the 'Gazette' of to-morrow night or Tuesday, which last day is the soonest I could write again, for this must go away this evening. The Great Seal has been sent for from the Commissioners, and, it is supposed, will be given again to Lord Thurlow.

Friday evening.

I saw nobody after Court; so, do not know what passed there, nor if anybody kissed hands; nor am likely to hear before the end of the evening, for I almost always dine alone and early, and do not go out till eight o'clock, when it would be too late to send this to the Secretary's Office.

If the Parliament is dissolved, as it may be by this time for aught I know, I shall go to Strawberry Hill, for nobody will be left in town, but all gone to their re-elections; so, I could only transcribe the 'Gazette,' and be able to send you little news.

2289. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Dec. 30, 1783.

I AM not such a buzzard, Madam, but that I did guess from your Ladyship's silence *and other circumstances*, that my last letter or two were not to your taste. I was, and perhaps shall be, a prophet; but as that is a profession never honoured in its own country (as I can say with truth and a little vanity I have often found), I shall touch on nothing you do not like. I obeyed your silence, lest I should say what you wished me not to say; and now you bid me write again, I am ready to talk nonsense rather than sense, being sure that I have much more talent for the one than the other.

News, I know none, but that they are crying Peerages about the streets in barrows, and can get none off. Lord Chesterfield is named Ambassador to Spain, to pay off the old debt of sending us Gondomar,[1] and the Foundling Hospital is to be converted into an Academy of Politicians.

I did mean to pass my holidays at Twickenham, but the weather is so severe I did not venture. I have been so perfectly well since I came to town, that I will not risk another rheumatism.

American news may now be a neutral article; Washington, *qui, il me semble, tranche un peu du Roi*, has instituted a military order, and calls it the order of Cincinnatus, *ce qui tranche un peu du pedant.* He sent it to La Fayette, and it made an uproar in Paris. As the *noblesse* spell only by the ear, they took it for the order of St. Senatus. They had recourse to the calendar, and, finding no such saint in heaven's almanac, they concluded it was a new canonisation at Boston, and were enraged that Washington should encroach on the papacy as well as on the diadem. It may offend even the Bishop of Derry [Hervey], who has renounced all religions to qualify himself for being a cardinal. Lord Edward Fitzgerald told me last night that he fears the volunteers are very serious: *sans compter* the spirits which the late Revolution here may give them—but I had better break off, lest I offend by sliding into politics, which you dislike.

I shall like prodigiously to be teadrunkwith'd by Lady Ossory and the Graces, whether they are consubstantial or only coexistent, and shall not regret Mdlle. Heinel,[2] with

Her arms sublime that float upon the air.

You laugh at my distresses, Madam, but it is a very serious thing to have taken an old cook as yellow as a dishclout, and have her seduced by a jolly dog of a coachman, and have her miscarry of a child and go on with a dropsy. All my servants think that the moment they are useless I must not part with them, and so I have an infirmary instead of a *ménage;* and those that are good for anything do nothing but get children, so that my house is a mixture of a county and foundling hospital. I don't wonder at his Majesty, who has packed off the decrepit Earl and the procreative Bishop. Adieu till Thursday.

[1] Gondomar was a wit; the Lord Chesterfield of this letter anything but a wit, which his predecessor in the earldom certainly was.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] See vol. v. p. 327.—CUNNINGHAM.

You accuse me of twenty things that I have no sort of title to, as sense, prudence, entertainment, jollity, and mystery. Who would ever think, Madam, of those being features in my character? It is like your desiring me to write and *promising* me not to say above two words in answer to my letters. Indeed, I shall not write on those terms. I have no more vanity than hypocrisy; and, if you would only substitute *indifference* in the place of all the attributes you have so graciously bestowed on me, you would find it the sole key to almost every action of my life for some time past, and I believe for all to come. With neither love nor hatred, with neither avarice nor ambition, it is very seldom that one grows a hypocrite after being the contrary. If I could be vain or forget myself, your Ladyship's compliments would have that effect; but, as they have not turned my head hitherto, I trust they will not be able, and then I am sure nothing else will, since I can boast and desire to boast of nothing but being yours, &c.

2290. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 8, 1784.

The Gazettes have told you all the changes. The House of Commons is to meet on Monday, and all expectation hangs thereon. Each party promises itself—or others the majority. I never deal in prophecies; and, not having more *knowledge* than prophets, I shall not pretend to foretell the event, much less the consequences it will produce either way.

I have other reasons for writing to you. Cavalier Mozzi's message by you, and his letter to Mr. Duane, will, I think, put an end to our arbitrage. I do not imagine that Mr. Lucas will give up the interest upon interest, at least not without such strong reluctance as will make it very difficult for me, as my Lord's nominee, to decide against him. On the other hand, I do not see how Mr. Duane, or even I, can pronounce *for* that accumulated interest, after such earnest protests of Cavalier Mozzi. My inclination, therefore, as I must, either way, give such dissatisfaction, and as the lawyers are so positive in their contradictory opinions, is to decline the arbitrage. At present we can do nothing. Lucas is in the West, looking after Lord Orford's boroughs, in case the Parliament should be dissolved. I myself have an avocation or occupation of a more melancholy kind.

My brother, Sir Edward, is, I fear, dying: yesterday we had no hopes; a sort of glimmering to-day, but scarce enough to be called a ray of hope. He has for a great number of years enjoyed perfect health, and even great beauty, without a wrinkle, to seventy-seven; but last August his decline began by an aversion to all solids. He came to town in the beginning of November; his appetite totally left him; and in a week he became a very infirm, wrinkled, old man. We think that he imagined he could cure himself by almost total abstinence. With great difficulty he was persuaded to try the bark; it restored some appetite, and then he would take no more. In a word, he has starved himself to death, and is now so emaciated and weak, that it is almost impossible he should be saved, especially as his obstinacy continues; nor will he be persuaded to take sustenance enough to give him a chance, though he is sensible of his danger, and cool, tranquil, perfectly in his senses as ever. A cordial, a little whey, a dish of tea, it costs us all infinite pains to induce him to swallow. I much doubt whether entire tractability could save him!

I am very sorry your Swedish King[1] is so expensive to you. Should he think of any return, do not be disappointed, if, on opening a weighty bale, you find nothing but a heap of copper money.

Lord Hardwicke[2] is a great oaf, both in the book he has written, and in thinking it worth being sent so far as to Florence. The ignorance in it is extreme, and so are the blunders. The fable of the late King giving my father a large sum of money towards building Houghton must have been borrowed from some vulgar pamphlet or magazine. There is not a shadow of truth in it, nor did one of the family ever hear of it. I do not mean to impeach the late King's goodness to him; but, for presents, he most assuredly never made him but two: a very large diamond, but with a great flaw in it, which Lady Mary had; and, after the Queen's death, her crystal hunting-bottle, with a golden stopper and cup. I have often heard my father mention these as the only *presents*. He was too grateful and too frank to have been silent on money: nor would it have

[1] Gustavus III. In 1783, having been advised by his physicians to spend the winter in a milder climate than Sweden, he set out in the beginning of October for Italy, and remained during the winter and ensuing spring at Pisa, Rome, Naples, Florence, and Genoa.—WALPOLE.

[2] Philip, second Earl of Hardwicke. The book alluded to was a collection of anecdotes respecting Sir Robert Walpole, called 'Walpoliana,' printed in 4to, but not published. Lord Hardwicke died in 1790.—WALPOLE.

escaped the Opposition, who were reduced to charge him with falsehoods, in want of truths. This pretended friend was reduced to fish in the kennels of Grub Street, to eke out his meagre anecdotes of a man whose long Administration might have furnished so many; but, like his Lordship's other publications, they are all dead before him! He has all his life resembled an angler, who stands for hours and days by a river with a line and hook, and at last catches a paltry dace or bleak, which no mortal will touch.

Some events next week must produce; I perhaps shall be shut up in the house of mourning, and know little of the matter! Parliamentary debates are now so circumstantially detailed in the newspapers, that at best I could but send you extracts. Adieu!

2291. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 13, 1784.

Amid the distresses of my family I can find time to send you but few lines. My brother died yesterday evening, with the same constant tranquillity which he had preserved through his whole illness. His almost unvaried health from soon after thirty to seventy-seven, his ample fortune and unambitious temper, make his life and death rather to be envied than lamented. His boundless benevolence and charity had left him but very moderate wealth, which he has given chiefly to his eldest daughter, Mrs. Keppel.

Yesterday was the mighty day of expectation in the House of Commons: at six in the morning the ex-Ministers had a majority of 39.

I could tell you but few or no particulars, having been shut up entirely at my brother's; and this whole morning was employed on reading his Will, and other melancholy duties, till seven this evening, when I have barely time to write and send this to the Secretary's Office. It was expected yesterday that the Parliament will be immediately dissolved—what the opinion is to-day, I do not at all know. I am interrupted, and must bid you good night.

2292. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Jan. 13, 1784.

I CAN just use one hand enough slowly to scratch out a few thanks to your Ladyship for your very kind notification. Indeed, I had heard the agreeable news yesterday; and also that the Duke had sent word to Lord Euston by Mr. Pratt, that he will continue his allowance. I am heartily glad; not being of so romantic an age as to believe that love and a cottage compose very durable felicity. The Duke of Grafton has certainly acted very temperately. It would be most unjust to say that a father has not cause to be displeased at his child marrying against his consent. That he will be satisfied with Lady Euston, if she ever has the happiness of being known to him, I am persuaded. I do not know so perfect a young woman; she has all her father's sense and temper, and the utmost discretion. They who spread absurd stories about her, had not one of the three. I know some of them; they are hags of high rank; they bestow Sunday mornings on church, and the rest of the year on scandal, malice, envy, and lies of their neighbours: and their neighbours are those of the Gospel, the first that falls in their way. Three of those pious Furies are sisters, and their names the Ladies Tisiphone, Megæra, and Alecto.

I can say to-day, Madam, that I do believe my gout is going. One of the fogs, or the eternal fog, gave me cold last week, and my pains returned a little. From being foolhardy, I am grown such a coward, that I do not believe I shall venture to moult a single wrapper this age.

You see the Airgonauts have passed the Rubicon. By their own account they were exactly birds; they flew through the air, perched on the top of a tree, some passengers climbed up and took them in their nest. The smugglers, I suppose, will be the first that will improve on the plan. However, if the project is ever brought to any perfection, (though I apprehend it will be addled, like the ship that was to live under water and never came up again,) it will have a different fate from other discoveries, whose inventors are not known. In this age all that is done (as well as what is never done) is so faithfully recorded, that every improvement will be registered

chronologically. Mr. Blanchard's 'Trip to Calais' puts me in mind of Dryden's Indian Emperor:

> What divine monsters, O ye gods, are these,
> That float in air, and fly upon the seas!

Dryden little thought that he was prophetically describing something more exactly than ships as conceived by Mexicans. If there is no air-sickness, and I were to go to Paris again, I would prefer a balloon to the packet-boat, and had as lief roost in an oak as sleep in a French inn, though I were to caw for my breakfast like the young ravens.

This is a volume for me, Madam, and my hand must lie down and take a nap.

2293. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 19, 1784.

I CAN never suspect your Ladyship of want of goodness: you would not choose a moment of tenderness for showing indifference. Indeed, though the last six days of my brother's life were most afflicting to behold, I had cause for nothing but satisfaction from the instant he expired; nor even before, could I have shut out the sight. He had passed a very long life with every enjoyment he chose, with almost equal health. He did not wish to live longer; he leaves nobody he loved in distress; he died without suffering, though his case ought to have been excruciating—it was beyond the power of remedy; and his indifference, unabated firmness, his gaiety at moments within two days of his exit, and his unaffected heroism, are all subjects of consolation; and the tranquillity of his mind enviable. Yet, I assure you, Madam, that death is so much more tiresome a thing than I had imagined, that I had far rather that mine should be extempore than philosophic. I do not like the apparatus at all, and hope I shall know no more of my going out of the world than I did of my coming into it. Life is a farce, and should not end with a mourning scene.

Lord Ossory will tell you much more than I could, Madam, of the world's bigger features. I was in the chambers of death on the *twelfth*, when the battle was fighting, which has not yet proved decisive, though the generals were so unequally matched, nor even the forces. The vanquished still hold out, though the language of

the commanders is desponding enough to make their soldiers disband. The want of pay is yet more disheartening; and the late vapour of a benevolence betrays the lowness of the military chest, which was to have raised a new army; the thought of which is now said to be given up—at least Mr. Pitt's friends and those of the Chancellor affectedly proclaim *their* aversion to the measure, and lay all blame on *superior* obstinacy, which alone forbids Mr. Pitt's resignation; as on the other side the whispers from the backstairs lament the latter's irresolution. I know not what foundation either have for what they give out; nor whether both do not speak to shift off the disgrace of a defeat from themselves.

2294. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 2, 1784.

As your nephew tells me that he sends you punctual accounts of our politics, I shall say nothing on them. I do not know how he contrives to give you a clear idea of them, so fluctuating and uncertain they are. Once or twice a week there is a day which it is said will be decisive. *To-day* is in that number; yet I expect it so little, that I am writing to you at ten at night, without inquiring whether the House of Commons, where action was expected, is up; without knowing what was to be there.

My reason for writing is to tell Cavalier Mozzi, through you, that Lucas was with me this morning along with Messrs. Duane and Sharpe. I then acquainted them, as I had resolved, that Mr. Sharpe, having received from the Cavalier, and I from you, the strongest remonstrances against the *injustice criante* of allowing my Lord interest upon interest, and Mr. Lucas adhering to the demand, I did not see how Mr. Duane and I could proceed any further as referees; as, to decide on either side, must discontent the other; whereas our business was to accord them as amicably as we could, consistently with equity. Mr. Duane then declared against the legality of interest on interest. I said, if it was illegal, it was not a point on which we *could* decide, but ought to be left to lawyers; and that it would be better to name two new lawyers, one on each side; and, if they disagreed, to call in a third who should pronounce decisively. Mr. Duane was warm against that; said, the whole cause must be gone over again, and would not end in years. He was for offering my Lord 600*l.* out of 2431*l.* demanded by Lucas, who on the other

hand offered to abate 1000*l.* Neither would come into the proposal of the other. At last, after many words, I hit on this expedient—that the 5457*l.*, which we had all agreed my Lord should receive as a compromise of the demands of both parties, (and which yet Lucas persists in calling a very liberal concession on my Lord's part, not, I believe, because strictly just, but he having all the proofs in his hands, and Mr. Sharpe few or none but what Lucas pleased to give him,) I proposed, I say, that Mr. Duane and I should decide that sum to my Lord, and then that my Lord and the Cavalier should settle as they could the demand of 2431*l.* Mr. Duane and Mr. Sharpe were much pleased with this expedient. Lucas did not like it so well, but could urge nothing material against it. On that issue we left it for the present. Lucas is to write to my Lord, and Mr. Sharpe to Mozzi, who will now know what he likes to do, and how much of the 2431*l.* he will sacrifice for a termination. He may take what time he will to consider on it, or what measures he pleases to obtain as much as he can. Do not let him answer hastily or inconsiderately. If he is impatient to finish, I believe Lucas is as eager to finger the money for my Lord. The more patient will have the advantage. As I believe the demand exorbitant, if not totally unjust, I cannot help saying, that I should think Mozzi had better offer but little at first, which may make Lucas at last accept less than he would if the offer were considerable. A delay cannot make much addition to the time already lost; and whatever he recovers by this new contestation will pay him for losing two or three months more.

I have thus done all that was possible for me to do in my situation. Thinking my party in the wrong in general, though perhaps not wholly, (as it does seem that my Lady had appropriated some things to herself to which she had no right,) I have preferred justice to partiality towards the person for whom I acted; and as I avowed to Lucas to-day, I have contradicted him throughout whenever I knew (by my own acquaintance with the affairs of the family) that he urged what was not true or matter of fact: for instance, in the case of Lady Orford's jewels, the chief of which I remembered my brother had retained when she went abroad. Still, I dare to say, that, besides displeasing my Lord and Lucas, I shall not have answered Cavalier Mozzi's expectations. I can only say to that, that when I have submitted, I have been guided by Mr. Duane, and never allowed but what he said ought to be allowed—and yet I assure you he has not flinched a jot when he thought Lucas

unreasonable. Mr. Sharpe has said less, but has been against the interest on interest.

Upon the whole, I am still of opinion that had Cavalier Mozzi come over when I advised him, he would have fared better—but that is past.

You, my dear sir, will be as tired as I am of this tedious affair; but your goodness to poor Mozzi will make you excuse it. I could not possibly have explained myself to him in Italian, nor even in French; he is lucky that I could not in terms of law, which even you could not have translated into Italian, nor perhaps into sense. Adieu! I am quite fatigued, having been writing another letter on business.

I have received and thank you for the two prints of old Cosimo's Duchess; and I thank you for telling me the price of the 'Fatti Farnesiani,' which I shall pay directly to Mr. Croft; I have been so hurried by my brother's death, that I forgot it till just now on reading your last of Jan. 10th again.

2295. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 2, 1784.

I THANK you for your condolence[1] on the death of my brother,[2] and on the considerable diminution of my own fortune, though neither are events to which I am not perfectly reconciled.[3] My

[1] This letter is not printed, nor have I seen it.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Sir Edward Walpole, K.B., Clerk of the Pells, and Clerk of the Pleas in the Exchequer, died January 12, 1784.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] "I shall tell you a great secret, the cause of my late difference with Mr. Mason. [1785.] Lord Harcourt, Mason, and I used often to meet together, as we cordially agreed in our sentiments of the public measures pursued during this reign. But when the India Bill of Fox came to be agitated, Mason took a decided part against it; nay, wrote to me that, upon this occasion, every one ought to assist the King; and warmly recommended it to me to use my influence in that cause.

"You may imagine I was a little surprised at this new style of my old friend, and the impertinence of giving his advice unasked. I returned a light ironical answer. As Mason had, in a sermon preached before the Archbishop of York, publicly declared that he would not accept of a bishopric, if offered to him, I jeeringly told him that I supposed his antipathy to a bishopric had subsided. He being also the first promoter of the York Associations for Parliamentary Reform, which I never approved, I added, that I supposed he intended to use that fool Wyvill as a tool of popularity; for Wyvill is so stupid that he cannot even write English; and the first York Association paper, which is written by Wyvill, is neither sense nor grammar.

"To return to Lord Harcourt; he was so obnoxious to the Court, that when his

brother was seventy-seven, had enjoyed perfect health and senses to that age, did not even begin to break till last August, suffered no pain, saw death advance gradually though fast, with the coolest tranquillity, did not even wish to live longer, and died both with indifference and without affectation; is that a termination to lament?

I do lose fourteen hundred a-year by his death, but had I reason to expect to keep it so long? I had twice been offered the reversion for my own life, and positively refused to accept it, because I would receive no obligation that might entangle my honour and my gratitude, and set them at variance. I never did ask or receive a personal favour from my own most intimate friends when in power, though they were too upright to have laid me under the same difficulties, and have always acted an uniform and honest part; but though I love expense, I was content with a fortune far above any merit I can pretend to, and knew I should be content with it were it much lessened. As it would be contemptible to regret the

mother lately died, the Queen did not send a message to the Countess, to say that she would call on her, though this be always done in etiquette to a countess, and as constantly refused. In consequence Lord and Lady Harcourt never went near the Court. But when Fox's India Bill came to the House of Lords, Lord Harcourt, probably by Mason's suggestions, remained to the very last of the question, and much distinguished himself against it. The consequence was, that, a few days after, Lord Harcourt called on me, to say that the King had sent him a message, requesting his acceptance of the embassy to Spain; and he concluded with begging my advice on the occasion. I told him at once that, since the King had sent such a message, I thought it was, in fact, begging pardon; 'and my Lord, I think you must go to Court, and return thanks for the offer, *as you do not accept it.*' But lo and behold, in a day or two [7th Aug., 1784] Lady Harcourt was made Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen, and Lord Harcourt was constantly dangling in the drawing-room.

"Soon after, Mason, in another letter, asked me what I thought of Lord Harcourt becoming such a courtier, &c. I was really shocked to see a man, who had professed so much, treat such a matter so lightly, and returned a pretty severe answer. Among other matters, I said ironically, that, since Lord Harcourt had given his cap-and-dagger ring to little master, he (Mason) need no longer wonder at my love for my bust of Caligula; for Lord Harcourt used formerly always to wear a seal-ring, with the cap of Liberty between two daggers, when he went to Court; but he gave it to a little boy [Lady Jersey's] upon his change; and I, though a warm friend of republicanism, have a small bust of Caligula in bronze, much admired for its fine workmanship.

"The consequence of these differences has been, that we call on each other, but are on the coldest terms.

"I ought to have mentioned that Mr. Mason, in his latter epistle to me, condoled with me on the death of my brother, by which I lost 1400*l.* a-year. In my answer I told him there was no room for condolence in the affair, my brother having attained the age of seventy-seven; and I myself, being an old man of sixty-eight, so that it was time for the old child to give over buying of baubles. I added, that Mr. Mason well knew that the place had been twice offered to me for my own life, but I had refused, and left it on the old footing of my brother's." *Walpoliana*, pp. 91 to 94.—CUNNINGHAM.

diminution at sixty-six, there is no merit in being quite easy under the loss. But you do me honour I do not deserve in complimenting me on not loving money. I have always loved what money would purchase, which is much the same thing; and the whole of my philosophy consists in reconciling myself to buying fewer baubles for a year or two that I may live, and when the old child's baby-house is quite full of playthings.

I am surprised that you expected me to take notice of Lord Harcourt's turning courtier. It did not astonish me in the least, as I have known for near two years that such an event was by no means improbable, and did myself try to contribute to it when I thought it not at all irreconcileable with his former conduct. Nor do I wonder at your announcing in effect the same of yourself. Were I surprised, I should contradict one of my own maxims which I have scarce or never known to fail, and which is, that men are always most angry with those with whom they quarrel last, which produces reconciliations between those whose hatreds agree *in eodem Tertio*. But in truth I concern myself in no man's politics but my own; first, because I have no more right to dictate to others, than I allow any body to dictate to me; and secondly, because I can see into no heart but my own, nor know its real motives of action. My own point has been to be consistent ever since I first thought on politics, which was five-and-forty years ago, and I feel a satisfaction in having been so steady, because it seems to me if I do not deceive or flatter myself, that it is a proof that I have acted on principle and not from disappointment, resentment, passion, interest, or fickleness.

It made me smile indeed when I heard that Lord Harcourt on his change had given away his ring of Brutus to Lady Jersey's little boy; because I do not see how any thing that has happened within this twelvemonth has affected the character of Brutus, who died seventeen hundred years before the *Coalition was thought on;* I am glad however that if I change, I may keep my Caligula without committing treason.

Your distinction of the *Crown's friends* is, I own, too theologic a refinement for my simple understanding, who never conceived a confusion of two natures in one person, yet still remaining separate; nor in human affairs should I comprehend why a Pope's disgracing himself as a gentleman by the meanest duplicity should make one fall in love with his Tiara. Do you think I should accept it for sound reasoning if you were capable of telling me, that though you vowed in a sermon that you would never be a Bishop, yet your gown

being distinct from you, you could see no reason why your gown *ought* not to be turned into lawn sleeves?

What miracles the new set of men that are to arise are to achieve, I neither know nor care; I shall be out of the question before that blessed Millennium arrives, unless they are already come, as perhaps they are, and for that too I cannot have long to care; though I firmly believe that your *new set* will only effect what has often been tried before, and what you say *ought* to be tried, *i. e.* to prove themselves the *Crown's friends*—an act of honest loyalty which I dare to say the wearer will be the first to forgive.

You see by my using the same liberality of correspondence I approve of yours. I am above disguising my sentiments, and am too low for any man to disguise his to me. Mine indeed having no variety in them, must be less entertaining, and therefore, unless I take a freak of hobbling to Court, you can have no curiosity to hear them, nor should I have mentioned them now, but that I thought it respectful to you, and candid when you communicated your new sentiments to me, to tell you that mine remained unaltered.

I cannot imagine why you think that I shall not like your tragedy; am I apt to dislike your writings? Though I am too sincere to flatter you when I think you unequal to yourself, I did reckon that I was one who had taste enough to be sensible to the utmost of the beauties of your capital works. Tragedy is certainly not a walk in which I believe you will miss your way; you have trodden more difficult paths with the happiest facility. I shall be glad to see your piece when you will indulge me with it.

I am yours ever,

H. W.

P. S. Mr. Jerningham has just published a new poem on the doctrines of the Scandinavian Bards. It is far superior to his other works. The versification is good; very many expressions and lines beautiful, and the whole nervous and not like his uniform turtle ditties. It might have been thrown into a better plan; and it ends rather abruptly and tamely. He seems to have kept the 'Descent of Odin' in his eye, though he had not the art of conjuring up the most forceful feelings, as Gray has done, in a subject in which there is so much of the terrible. Though one has scarce any idea of what the whole is about, yet one is enwrapt by it,—as one is delighted with the *Flower and Leaf* though a mere description of ladies in

white velvet and green satin set with rubies and emeralds, and holding wands of *agnus castus*.[1]

2296. THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.[2]

Nice, Feb. 4, 1784.

Saturday's post brought me your letter with the melancholy account of Sir Edward Walpole's death, which I acquainted the Duchess with as tenderly as possible. Though her great attachment to Sir Edward made her feel most deeply this event, yet I found her more prepared, and resigned than I expected. I took it very kind of you, Sir, that you took this manner of informing the Duchess.

Yours,

William Henry.

2297. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 6, 1784.

I am very sorry, Madam, to have occasion so soon to return your Ladyship's kind condolence on my brother's death. It is more difficult to speak on your loss, though I am persuaded you feel it more sensibly than I did mine, who was prepared for it, and saw it so gradual and so little grievous to himself, that I admired more than lamented. Yet your Ladyship, I hope, will have a consolation that I could not receive: I do not mean in point of fortune, though as you have children, you cannot be indifferent to a great accession, as the town says you are likely to have, and which I most sincerely wish; but in reality you will, instead of losing a parent, I trust, recover one. *That* I most heartily hope will happen both for your sake and hers! But it is not proper to say more; yet I could not

[1] After this letter (for the undated letter of Feb. or March, 1784, (No. 2298,) was, I believe, never sent), there was an interval of *twelve* years of silence, dislike, and distrust. In the spring of 1796 Mason reopened their correspondence, and the two returned to some habits of intercourse, and possibly to their old notions of regard for one another. The next year (1797) saw the deaths of both; Walpole on the 2nd of March, and Mason on the 7th of April.—Cunningham.

[2] Now first published.—Cunningham.

help telling you how much I have considered your present position under all its phases, and having done so I will mix nothing else with it; though without any Pindaric transition, one might easily slide into a variety of reflections, which, however foreign to the theme, would be all serious.

Your Ladyship's most devoted.

2298. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.[1]

[*Feb. or March*, 1784.]

You must blame yourself, not me, if you are displeased with my letters, which you forced from me. I had done all I could, both by silence, and by more than once or twice declaring I did not choose to write on politics, to avoid any political discussions with you. I could not be ignorant of Lord Harcourt's conversion, which for a moment had so much diverted the town, but I did not take the liberty to mention it to him. On the contrary, when he consulted me on going to Court, which I knew he had determined to do, on being offered the embassy to Spain, I told him I thought civility ought to be returned by respect. Neither was I quite ignorant of your change of sentiments; yet should never have uttered a syllable to you on that occasion, had you not chosen to notify it to me. Then I most certainly had an equal right to declare that my principles were not changed,—especially not by a circumstance, serious indeed in itself, but ludicrous if it had produced such an effect on me as to make me think the power of the Crown was diminished, was diminishing, and ought to be increased, because its (not secret, but open) influence had been used to force Lords of the Bedchamber, and even the holy heads of our Church, to sacrifice his conscience, duty, and opinion to his gratitude,—an example that tells me how much I have been in the right never to involve myself in such terrible obligations! *Ought* did not become you or me.

I am so far from being hurt at your quarrelling with me, that I thank you extremely for it, and still so cordially wish you whatever you may wish for yourself, that I should delight in seeing you Archbishop of York; for as you are excellent at distinctions, you can certainly discern the difference between an Archbishop and a

[1] This is the letter which I believe was never sent. See note, ante, p. 459.—Cunningham.

Bishop, as easily as between a King and his crown. I am, Sir, with due regard and esteem,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

H. W.[1]

P.S. I have for five-and-forty years acted upon the principles of the Constitution, as it was settled at the Revolution, the best form of government that I know of in the world, and which made us a free people, a rich people, and a victorious people, by diffusing liberty, protecting property, and encouraging commerce; and by the combination of all, empowering us to resist the ambition of the House of Bourbon, and to place ourselves on a level with that formidable neighbour. The narrow plan of Royalty, which had so often preferred the aggrandisement of the Crown to the dignity of presiding over a great and puissant free kingdom, threw away one predominant source of our potency by aspiring to enslave America, and would now compensate for the blunder and its consequences by assuming a despotic power at home. It has found a tool in the light and juvenile son [Mr. Pitt] of the great Minister who carried our glory to its highest pitch. But it shall never have the insignificant approbation of an old and worn-out son of another Minister [Sir Robert Walpole], who, though less brilliantly, maintained this country in the enjoyment of the twenty happiest years that England ever enjoyed. Your pert and ignorant Cabal at York, picking up factious slander from party libels, stigmatised that excellent man as the patron of corruption, though all his views and all his notions tended to nothing but to preserve the present family on the throne, and the nation in peace and affluence. Your own blind ambition of being the head of a party, which had no precise system in view, has made you embrace every partial sound which you took for popularity; and being enraged at every man who would not be dictated to by your crude visions, you have floundered into a thousand absurdities; and, though you set out with pretending to reform Parliament, in order to lower the influence of the Crown, you have plunged into the most preposterous support of prerogative, because Lord North, then the Crown Minister, declared against your innovations, and has since fallen into disgrace with the King. I am not so little

[1] On the 7th of August, 1784, the Countess of Harcourt was made a Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen, in the room of the Duchess of Argyll, resigned.—CUNNINGHAM.

rooted in my principles as to imitate or co-operate with you. I am going out of the world, and am determined to die as I have lived—*consistent*. You are not much younger than I am, and ought to have acted a more temperate and rational part;—but that is no business of mine.

2299. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

March 12, 1784.

Your nephew sends you such regular accounts from the fountain-head, the House of Commons, that I could only retail them more imperfectly. As it will not be long before you see him, you will understand our state of politics better by question and answer, than from maimed or partial relations. The present face of things looks like a suspension of arms—not a truce; much less has your half-nephew succeeded in his endeavours to negotiate an accommodation. The Opposition acquiesce in raising the supplies; and, consequently, the rest of the session is not likely to be tempestuous, as it has been.

You may be sure that *I* approve of your nephew's intention of withdrawing from Parliament. As I have never for one moment regretted my own retirement from that disagreeable occupation, I cannot wonder at another's being sick of it. Ambition, vanity, and interest may reconcile one to acting a part in their theatre; but where *they* are weak motives, or not existent, how many are there to disgust!

You perceive that I have received yours of Feb. 14th, and the news of Florence in it, which require no answer. Nor have I any to send you in return. Politics have engrossed all conversation, and stifled other events, if any have happened. Thus, I find it difficult to be so punctual as I was wont, or to fill a decent sheet when I do write. Indeed, our ladies who used to contribute to enliven correspondence, are become politicians, and, as Lady Townley says, "squeeze a little too much lemon into conversation." They have been called back a little to their own profession—dress, by a magnificent ball which the Prince of Wales gave two nights ago to near six hundred persons, to which the Amazons of both parties were invited; and not a scratch was given or received!

I am impatient for Cavalier Mozzi's answer to Mr. Sharpe's letter. The one you sent me from the former came too late; and,

though he mentions the distress that delay would occasion to him by his probably missing the opportunity of buying into the French funds, it was impossible for me to go back. I had avoided the inconvenience of throwing up the refereeship, by the sole expedient of deciding all but the interest on interest, and leaving that to be accommodated by the parties themselves, on which it was impossible for me to pronounce, unless by allowing it to my Lord, which I both thought unjust, and which Cavalier Mozzi himself had *almost absolutely* forbidden me to grant—I say *almost*, for, though not *positively*, he had represented so strongly against it, that, concurring with mine and Mr. Sharpe's sentiments, I could not think myself at liberty to comply; and indeed, if I had, Mr. Duane and I should, after so long a suspense, have been of very little use, as Lucas would have obtained very near all he demanded in the most unbounded manner at first. I have, I am persuaded, offended my Lord much, and do not doubt but that Lucas will have insinuated that I have given his Lordship full excuse for *doing any act* to my prejudice; but I laugh at that.—I am neither fool enough to expect to outlive him, nor care, if I should, whether he totally disinherits me, as I conclude he would. I will not pay the smallest degree of court to him, but rather less, if less could be, since I am become his next heir. I will not owe even what my birth would entitle to, to any insincerity. Judge, then, whether I should not be hurt, if Cavalier Mozzi should suspect me of having acted with any partiality. I doubt whether I have not shown too much on *his* behalf, though I have often checked myself when I perceived it; for indignation at the treatment of him, resentment on other accounts to his adversaries, and even the vanity, the ostentatious vanity of acting uprightly, may, and I really believe have, biassed my inclinations *against* the party *for* whom I was employed:—but then, I have really done nothing but by Mr. Duane's advice; and by his advice have allowed much more to my Lord than I ever believed he had a right to; and which, if he had behaved handsomely, and not been guided by Lucas, he would not have claimed, whatever his pretensions were.

I beg your pardon for dwelling so much on this tedious affair. You will soon, I trust, hear no more of it.

2300. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 26, 1784.

The Dissolution of Parliament, a manœuvre so long upon the anvil, and so often intermitted, has at last taken place. The King went to the House on Wednesday, and in few words declared his intention;—a strange event interrupted the blow for a moment. In the preceding night, some thieves had broken into the Chancellor's house, and stolen the Great Seal! The hubbub it occasioned for some hours was prodigious; but, as forms and ceremonies are not quite so awful as before Time was arrived at years of discretion, a cast was taken off, and served for the death warrant of the House of Commons last night. In truth there does not seem to remain any terror in solemnity, when housebreakers make free with the head of the law himself. I doubt, that, for a month or six weeks to come, one shall have additional occasion to keep watch and ward. All the island will be a scene of riot, and probably of violence. The parties are not separated in gentle mood: there will, they say, be contested elections everywhere; consequently, vast expense and animosities. The Court, it is believed, will have the majority in the new Parliament. As your nephew does not intend to be of it, you will, I conclude, see him soon; but he is out of town, and I know nothing of him. I only write now just to mark the crisis, though to-morrow's papers would have notified the event; but you love, now and then, to have the confirmation from me. I have not received from you that of the Pretender's death,[1] though it has been public here this fortnight. I do not mean that I cared a straw about it; and perhaps you thought you had mentioned it. Does his brother mean to encircle his hat with a diadem, like old King Henry of Portugal;[2] or rather more like the imaginary Charles the Tenth of France,[3] the puppet of the League?

I have not only not heard from you on the part of Mozzi, but not a word from Sharpe; and, therefore, I conclude no answer is come.

[1] This proved to be erroneous. He had, however, been given over, and had received extreme unction.—Walpole.

[2] Cardinal Henry, uncle and successor of Don Sebastian.—Walpole.

[3] The Cardinal of Bourbon, uncle of Henry IV. of France, proclaimed king by the name of Charles X. by the League, though a prisoner to his nephew, in which confinement he died.—Walpole.

We have no private news at all. Indeed, politics are all in all. I question whether any woman intrigues with a man of a different party. Little girls say, "Pray, Miss, of which side are you?" I heard of one that said, "Mama and I cannot get Papa over to our side!"

The weather is as violent as our contests. Though the winter was so long and severe, we had snow two days ago, and have again to-day; yet our calamities are trifling to what we hear from the continent: from Germany, destruction of bridges by inundations; and still more dreadful from Holland. Well! politics and tempests are important in their day, and then sink into the mass of events, and lose their striking characteristics—the sufferings of individuals. I have lived so long, and have seen such a succession of both kinds of convulsions, that they make little more impression on me than the scenes of a play.

To the present drama, Elections, I shall totally shut my ears. Such subjects as, however noisy, one is sure to hear of no more the moment they are over, are to me insupportable. I hated elections forty years ago; and, when I went to White's, preferred a conversation on Newmarket to one on elections: for the language of the former I did not understand, and, consequently, did not listen to; the other, being uttered in common phrase, made me attend, whether I would or not. When such subjects are on the tapis, they make me a very insipid correspondent. One cannot talk of what one does not care about; and it would be jargon to you, if I did: however, do not imagine but I allow a sufficient quantity of dulness to my time of life. I have kept up a correspondence with you with tolerable spirit for three-and-forty years together, without our once meeting. Can you wonder that my pen is worn to the stump? You see it does not abandon you; nor, though conscious of its own decay, endeavour to veil it by silence. The Archbishop of Gil Blas has long been a lesson to me to watch over my own ruins; but I do not extend that jealousy of vanity to commerce with an old friend. You knew me in my days of folly and riotous spirits; why should I hide my dotage from you, which is not equally my fault and reproach? I take due care that nobody should hear of me but two or three, who persuade me that I still live in their memories; by the rest I had rather be forgotten

2301. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 30, 1784.

As I expect your nephew in town previously to his setting out for Florence, and as his residence, I conclude, from his having let his house in London, will be very short, I prepare a letter to send by him, lest I should not have time to write it leisurely when he comes, and is departing again instantly.

My letters, since the great change in the Administration, have been rare, and much less informing than they used to be. In a word, I was not at all glad of the Revolution, nor have the smallest connection with the new occupants. There has been a good deal of boldness on both sides. Mr. Fox, convinced of the necessity of hardy measures to correct and save India, and coupling with that rough medicine a desire of confirming the power of himself and his allies, had formed a great system, and a very sagacious one; so sagacious, that it struck France with terror. But as the new power was to be founded on the demolition of that nest of monsters, the East [India] Company, and their spawn of Nabobs, &c., they took the alarm; and the secret junto at Court rejoiced that they did. The Court struck the blow at the Ministers; but it was the gold of the Company that really conjured up the storm, and has diffused it all over England.

On the other hand, Mr. Pitt has braved the majority of the House of Commons, has dissolved the existent one, and, I doubt, given a wound to that branch of the Legislature, which, if the tide does not turn, may be very fatal to the Constitution. The nation is intoxicated, and has poured in Addresses of Thanks to the Crown for exerting the prerogative *against* the palladium of the people. The first consequence will probably be that the Court will have a considerable majority upon the new elections. The country has acted with such precipitation, and with so little knowledge of the question, that I do not doubt but thousands of eyes will be opened and wonder at themselves; but the mischief will be done! But, without talking of futurity and constitutional points, you may easily judge what detriment the nation must have received already. The first year after a war—and after so fatal a war!—was the moment to set about repairing what could be repaired. *That* year is already lost, totally lost! not a measure has been taken yet; and it will be the end of

May before even the session can begin. Unanimity, too, was essential; instead of which, behold two parties revived with as much animosity as ever actuated factions, except in religious wars! It was deemed of the last urgency that the East India Bill should have gone by the ships in February! not a bill is yet in the egg-shell. The Cabinet of Versailles speak their opinion plainly, by being zealous for Mr. Pitt; a sad compliment to him! And they are sending a powerful fleet to India, accompanied by Spaniards and Dutch. Guess how near we are to peace with Holland! Add to all these difficulties the incapacity of the new Ministers. Mr. Pitt is certainly an extraordinary young man; but is he a supernatural one? Do not trust to me but believe the Foreign Ministers. There is but one voice amongst them on the marvellous superiority of Mr. Fox, and the unheard-of facility of doing business with him. *He* made the peace between the Turks and Russia; and Simonin, the latter's Minister, told the King himself so in the Drawing-room since Fox's fall. On the contrary, those foreigners talk loudly of the extreme ignorance of the new Secretaries. Our Ambassador at Paris is a proverb of insufficience. Lord Shelburne (who, by the way, seems likely to succeed one of his successors, Lord Sydney,) said the other day, "Upon my word, I hear that the Duke of Dorset's letters are written very well; he talks of the ceded islands as if he knew where they are."

This is a brief sketch of part of our history; for particulars, I refer myself to your nephew. You, with whom I have conversed so freely for above forty years, could not want a clue to my sentiments on the present crisis. I never have changed my principles, nor am likely. I shall continue to write to you on great events, but without comments, which would be unnecessary after I have given you this key.

In a general view, I suppose we shall fall into all the distractions of a ruined country. The memory of what we have been so recently will exasperate our feelings; or we shall grow insensible, remain dissipated till totally impoverished, and perhaps imagine from indolence that submission is ease! I am so near the end of my course, that I bear these uncomfortable prospects with more indifference than I should have done some years ago. I take no part; for, when boys are on the stage, a veteran makes but an awkward figure: nor can I tap a new controversy, of which I shall probably see but little of the progress. Methinks one ought to be ready to go at one's time, and not be called away when one has much to do.

I was enough engaged when the former Pitt[1] and Fox were the heroes of the scene. Were I to list under the son of the one or the other, I should feel as if I were reading the romance of 'Amadis de Gaul,' which continues through the adventures of his son.

April 11*th.*

I hear nothing of your nephew, nor know where to inquire; yet, as he has parted with his house in town and abandoned his borough, I conclude he perseveres in his intention of visiting you, and that I shall see him before he sets out.

The scene is wofully changed for the Opposition, though not half the new Parliament is yet chosen. Though they still contest a very few counties and some boroughs, they own themselves totally defeated. They reckon themselves sure of two hundred and forty members: they probably will not have an hundred and fifty; and, amongst them, not some capital leaders,—perhaps not the Commander-in-Chief, Mr. Fox,[2] certainly not the late Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Conway. In short, between the industry of the Court and the India Company, and that momentary frenzy that sometimes seizes a whole nation, as if it were a vast animal, such aversion to the Coalition and such a detestation of Mr. Fox have seized the country, that, even where omnipotent gold retains its influence, the elected pass through an ordeal of the most virulent abuse. The great Whig families, the Cavendishes, Rockinghams, Bedfords, have lost all credit in their own counties; nay, have been tricked out of seats where the whole property was their own: and in some of those cases a *royal* finger has too evidently tampered, as well as singularly and revengefully towards Lord North and Lord Hertford; the latter of whom, however, is likely to have six of his own sons[3] in the House of Commons—an extraordinary instance. Such a proscription, however, must have sown so deep resentment as it was not wise to provoke; considering that permanent fortune is a jewel that in no crown is the most to be depended upon!

When I have told you these certain truths, and when you must be aware that this torrent of unpopularity broke out in the capital, will

[1] Mr. Pitt was second son of William Earl of Chatham, who was also a second son, as Charles Fox was of Lord Holland, a second son also.—WALPOLE.

[2] Though Mr. Fox was elected both for Westminster and Kirkwall, petitions from both were presented against him.—WALPOLE.

[3] He did get but five of his sons into that parliament.—WALPOLE.

it not sound like a contradiction if I affirm that Mr. Fox himself is still struggling to be chosen for Westminster, and maintains so sturdy a fight, that Sir Cecil Wray, his antagonist, is not yet three hundred ahead of him, though the Court exerts itself against him in the most violent manner, by mandates, arts, &c.—nay, sent at once a body of two hundred and eighty of the Guards to give their votes as householders, which *is* legal, but which my father in the most quiet seasons would not have dared to do? At first, the contest threatened to be bloody: Lord Hood[1] being the third candidate, and on the side of the Court, a mob of three hundred sailors undertook to drive away the opponents; but the Irish chairmen,[2] being retained by Mr. Fox's party, drove them back to their element and cured the tars of their ambition of a naval victory. In truth, Mr. Fox has all the popularity in Westminster; and, indeed, is so amiable and winning, that, could he have stood in person all over England, I question whether he would not have carried the Parliament. The beldams hate him; but most of the pretty women in London are indefatigable in making interest for him, the Duchess of Devonshire[3] in particular. I am ashamed to say how coarsely she has been received by some worse than tars!—But me nothing has shocked so much as what I heard this morning: at Dover they roasted a poor *fox* alive by the most diabolic allegory!—a savage meanness that an Iroquois would not have committed. Base, cowardly wretches! how much nobler to have hurried to London and torn Mr. Fox himself piecemeal! I detest a country inhabited by such stupid barbarians. I will write no more to-night; I am in a passion!

April 15th, at night.

Your nephew has been in town for a moment, and called on me; but hurried into Kent, apprehending an opposition to his friend, Mr. Marsham:[4] but Lord Mahon,[5] a savage, a republican, a royalist—I don't know what not—has been forced to drop it; and your nephew

[1] Lord Hood was an admiral.—WALPOLE.

[2] Almost all the hackney-chairmen in London were Irish.—WALPOLE.

[3] Lady Georgiana Spencer. She certainly procured the greatest part of Mr. Fox's votes for him; though the Court party endeavoured to deter her by the most illiberal and indecent abuse, yet they could not fix the smallest stain on her virtue.—WALPOLE.

[4] The Hon. Charles Marsham, son and heir of Robert, second Lord Romney. Wraxall describes him as a man by no means prepossessing or engaging in his manners; but admits that he wanted not ability, and that he deservedly attracted general consideration in his parliamentary capacity.—WRIGHT.

[5] Lord Mahon, by his first marriage, stood in the near relation of brother-in-law to Mr. Pitt. He was a very eccentric man in dress and manners, and his opinions were tinged with republicanism. His temper was impetuous and fiery.—WALPOLE.

will set out immediately, and sends for this letter, which I must finish in haste. I can add nothing newly decisive. The Court will have a great majority; but the tide, at least here, begins to turn. They did not carry a supply of six new Directors of the East India Company swimmingly yesterday: Mr. Fox was within two or three voices of choosing three of those very friends who were to have been members of his bill, which proves that he has still great weight among the proprietors. His own election for Westminster still continues, and he has recovered much ground within these three days, so that Sir Cecil Wray's majority of above 300 is reduced to 175.

The aspect in Ireland is cloudy; nay, has been stormy. The mob broke into the House of Commons, and insulted the members for not passing what is called the Protecting Duties, which your nephew must explain; but the rioters were suppressed and imprisoned—*reste à voir* whether *the Volunteers* will not espouse *the Protecting Duties*, which might be very serious. I thought and said, that our India Bill was still more a bill for Ireland; meaning, that if lost, and the Ministry changed, I concluded the Irish would say, that it was not fit to be governed by a country that could not govern itself for six months together. It looks as if I had not been totally mistaken; nor shall I be, if France, whose whole eye is on India, should contrive to find us employment in Ireland. That island is more *à leur portée* than America was. In short, the present reign may be painted in one sentence, which I found t'other day in Muratori's 'Annals of Italy:' "*Cento si richieggono ad edificare; un solo basta per distruggere tutto.*" Adieu! Return me this letter.

2302. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Berkeley Square, April 20, 1784.

I HAD a person with me on particular business, which prevented me from answering the honour of your Lordship's obliging note immediately, and thanking you for the sight of Prior's picture, which is indeed an uncommonly fine head. I was prevented from waiting on your Lordship's ancestors, as I have been at Strawberry Hill, and returned but yesterday late; and I do not pretend to dispute Sir

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

Joshua's skill, as he must know better than I do the pencilling of different masters. At first sight I merely supposed the Prior was painted by old Dahl, but I dare to say Sir Joshua is in the right.

If inclination were to govern me, I should have no occasion to give a promise of visiting Nuneham; but as in second infancy, as well as in the first, one is in the power of one's parents, Father Age and Mother Gout do not allow me to enter into positive engagements, and I dare only pledge myself to do with their good pleasure, what I shall certainly wish, while I have, &c.

Hor. Walpole.

2303. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, April 29, 1784.

Never did more traverses happen even in a lawsuit than befall poor Cavalier Mozzi! Three weeks ago Mr. Duane sent me the Cavalier's letter to Mr. Sharpe, with the handsome offer of 1000*l.*, which I concluded my Lord would jump at; and I expected to hear, that, as soon as he could despatch an answer, I should have notice to settle the whole affair with the lawyers. No such summons arrived. Alas! the night before last I was told accidentally that Mr. Duane had had a stroke of apoplexy! I immediately wrote to Mr. Sharpe to inquire: he has this moment been with me, confirmed the melancholy story, adding, that he doubts much of Mr. Duane's recovery. However, he brought me my Lord's answer—satisfactory so far, as that he will close with the Cavalier's offer; but not at all content with it. No matter: the affair will at least be terminated, though neither side will be pleased. A little time, I suppose, will be wasted in waiting for the event of Mr. Duane's illness; and Lucas, as Mr. Sharpe said this morning, will not hurry himself a jot more than a snail: yet, whether poor Mr. Duane recovers or not, the matter will be adjusted; it might, no doubt, in a week, but I dare to say will not be finished in two months.

As I sent you all the news I knew by your nephew, I have none to add. Most elections are over; and, if they were not, neither you nor I care about such details. I have no notion of filling one's head with circumstances of which, in six weeks, one is to discharge it for ever. Indeed, it is well that I live little in the world, or I should be obliged to provide myself with that viaticum for common conversation. Our ladies are grown such vehement politicians, that no

other topic is admissible; nay, I do not know whether *you* must not learn our politics for the *conversazioni* at Florence,—at least, if Paris gives the *ton* to Italy, as it used to do. There are as warm parties for Mr. Fox or Mr. Pitt at Versailles and Amsterdam as in Westminster. At the first, I suppose, they exhale in epigrams; are expressed at the second by case-knives; at the last they vent themselves in deluges of satiric prints,[1] though with no more wit than there is in a case-knife. I was told last night that our engraved pasquinades for this winter, at twelvepence or sixpence a-piece, would cost six or seven pounds.

Having written thus far, I received yours of the 9th, in which I find Cavalier Mozzi is anew displeased with Mr. Sharpe, whom indeed I do not understand. He told me to-day, as justifying my Lord's dissatisfaction, that he did think his Lordship was entitled to interest on interest on part of his demand; namely, on what Lady Orford had taken away from the seats in the country. *This he had not intimated before;* nor indeed does he now pretend that my Lord should have more than the 1000*l.* that he consents to take. For Sharpe's demand of the same allowance as he used to have from my Lady, it is extortion; as he certainly, by his own statement, has not been collecting rents since her death. In short, I can only recur to my old opinion, that Cavalier Mozzi should have come over himself: I could have given him advice here; but being made referee for my Lord, I could not take part against him. I doubt I have gone to the utmost limits of decency and equity to protect Mozzi; and Lucas, I am persuaded, will have represented that delicacy in the worst light. I do not care; I will take no step to disculpate myself. I am only sorry that I could do no better for Mozzi: though I repeat it, he must in part blame himself for not coming to defend his own cause, which has given Sharpe and Lucas full elbow-room for plundering him;—and yet Sharpe blames, or pretends to blame, Lucas; and I must own, in justice to the former, that more than once he did provoke the latter by his opposition. I hope that Mozzi gained so much by Lady Orford's favour, from what was not within reach of our legal harpies, that he will be much at his ease.

[1] "Fox said that Sayers's Caricatures had done him more mischief than the debates in parliament, or the works of the press. The prints of Carlo Khan, Fox running away with the India House, Fox and Burke quitting Paradise when turned out of office, and many other of these publications, had certainly a vast effect on the public mind." *Lord Chancellor Eldon.* 'Life of Twiss,' vol. i. p. 162).—CUNNINGHAM.

We do not know that Lady Charlotte Herbert is dead, though a letter received to-day represents her case as totally desperate. Though her father was forced to be acquainted with her danger, his return will be far from a consolation. We are not surprised at any extravagance in his Lordship's morals, though at his age; but much at his profligacy, counteracting his avarice. I will give you one instance of the latter. At Wilton he always recommends his port before his other wines, saying, "I can warrant the port good, for I make it myself."

I am sorry to hear you are tormented by the rheumatism. I have had it in my shoulder, though not sharply, ever since last July, and prefer the gout to it. The latter goes at its period, and does not return for some time; but the rheumatism may depart to-day and come back to-morrow, or never leave one at all. Our winter has been doleful too, though less so than in many countries. Of spring there was not a symptom a fortnight ago, though commonly many trees and most shrubs are in full leaf by the end of April. I shall visit my Strawberry to-morrow, and hope at least to find the grass verdant. We are so pestered by robbers, that a month ago I thought they had stolen all the turf of my meadows. Good night! It is near one in the morning.

2304. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Berkeley Square, Wednesday, May 5, 1784.

Your cherries, for aught I know, may, like Mr. Pitt, be half ripe before others are in blossom; but at Twickenham, I am sure, I could find dates and pomegranates on the quickset hedges, as soon as a cherry in swaddling-clothes on my walls. The very leaves on the horse-chesnuts are little snotty-nosed things, that cry and are afraid of the north-wind, and cling to the bough as if *old poker* was coming to take them away. For my part, I have seen nothing like spring but a chimney-sweeper's garland; and yet I have been three days in the country—and the consequence was, that I was glad to come back to town.

I do not wonder that you feel differently; anything is warmth and verdure when compared to poring over memorials. In truth, I think you will be much happier for being out of Parliament. You could do no good there; you have no views of ambition to satisfy: and when neither duty nor ambition calls, (I do not condescend to name

avarice, which never is to be satisfied, nor deserves to be reasoned with, nor has any place in your breast,) I cannot conceive what satisfaction an elderly man can have in listening to the passions or follies of others: nor is eloquence such a banquet, when one knows that, whoever the cooks are, whatever the sauces, one has eaten as good beef or mutton before, and, perhaps, as well dressed. It is surely time to live for one's self, when one has not a vast while to live; and you, I am persuaded, will live the longer for leading a country life. How much better to be planting, nay, making experiments on smoke (if not too dear), than reading applications from officers, a quarter of whom you could not serve, nor content three quarters! You had not time for necessary exercise; and, I believe, would have blinded yourself. In short, if you will live in the air all day, be totally idle, and not read or write a line by candle-light, and retrench your suppers, I shall rejoice in your having nothing to do but that dreadful punishment, pleasing yourself. Nobody has any claims on you; you have satisfied every point of honour; you have no cause for being particularly grateful to the Opposition; and you want no excuse for living for yourself. Your resolutions on economy are not only prudent, but just; and, to say the truth, I believe that if you had continued at the head of the Army, you would have ruined yourself. You have too much generosity to have curbed yourself, and would have had too little time to attend to doing so. I know by myself how pleasant it is to have laid up a little for those I love, for those that depend on me, and for old servants. Moderate wishes may be satisfied; and, which is still better, are less liable to disappointment.

I am not preaching, nor giving advice, but congratulating you: and it is certainly not being selfish, when I rejoice at your being thrown by circumstances into a retired life, though it will occasion my seeing less of you: but I have always preferred what was most for your own honour and happiness; and as you taste satisfaction already, it will not diminish, for they are the first moments of passing from a busy life to a quiet one that are the most irksome. You have the felicity of being able to amuse yourself with what the grave world calls trifles; but as gravity does not happen to be wisdom, trifles are full as important as what is respected as serious; and more amiable, as generally more innocent. Most men are bad or ridiculous, sometimes both: at least my experience tells me what my reading had told me before, that they are so in a great capital of a sinking country. If immortal fame is his object, a Cato may die—

but he will do no good. If only the preservation of his virtue had been his point, he might have lived comfortably at Athens, like Atticus—who, by the way, happens to be as immortal; though I will give him credit for having had no such view. Indeed, I look on this country as so irrecoverably on the verge of ruin, from its enormous debt, from the loss of America, from the almost as certain prospect of losing India, that my pride would dislike to be an actor when the crash may happen.

You seem to think that I might send you more news. So I might, if I would talk of elections;[1] but those, you know, I hate, as, in general, I do all details. How Mr. Fox has recovered such a majority I do not guess; still less do I comprehend how there could be so many that had not voted, after the poll had lasted so long.[2] Indeed, I should be sorry to understand such mysteries.—Of new peers, or new elevations, I hear every day, but am quite ignorant which are to be true. Rumour always creates as many as the King, when he makes several. In fact, I do know nothing. Adieu!

P.S. The summer is come to town, but I hope is gone into the country too.

2305. TO MISS HANNAH MORE.[3]

May 6, 1784.

Mr. Walpole thanks Miss More a thousand times, not only for so obligingly complying with his request, but for letting him have the satisfaction of possessing and reading again and again her charming and very genteel poem, the 'Bas Bleu.' He ought not,

[1] The parliament had been dissolved in March, and a new one was summoned to meet on the 18th of May.—Wright.

[2] Mr. Pitt says, in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce, of the 8th of April, "Westminster goes on well, in spite of the Duchess of Devonshire and the other women of the people; but when the poll will close is uncertain." At the close of it, on the 17th of May, the numbers were, for Hood 6694, Fox 6223, Wray 5998. Walpole, whose delicate health at this time confined him almost entirely to his house, went in a sedan-chair to give his vote for Mr. Fox.—Wright.

[3] Walpole's intimacy with Miss Hannah More commenced in the year 1781. The following passages occur in her letters of that and the following year: "Mr. Walpole has done me the honour of inviting me to Strawberry Hill: as he is said to be a shy man, I must consider this as a great compliment."—"We dined the other day at Strawberry Hill, and passed as delightful a day as elegant literature, high breeding, and lively wit can afford. As I was the greatest stranger, Mr. Walpole devoted himself to my amusement with great politeness."—Wright.

in modesty, to commend so much a piece, in which he himself is flattered; but truth is more durable than blushing, and he must be just, though he may be vain. The ingenuity with which she has introduced, so easily, very difficult rhymes, is admirable; and though there is a quantity of learning, it has all the air of negligence, instead of that of pedantry. As she commands him, he will not disobey; and, so far from giving a single copy, he gives her his word that it shall not go out of his hands. He begs his particular compliments to Mrs. Garrick, and is Miss More's most devoted and much obliged humble servant.

2306. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, May 21, 1784.

I AM perfectly satisfied with your epitaph,[1] and would not have a syllable altered. It tells exactly what it means to say, and, that truth being an encomium, wants no addition or amplification. Nor do I love late language for modern facts, nor will European tongues perish since printing has been discovered. I should approve French least of all; it would be a kind of insult to the vanquished: and, besides, the example of a hero should be held out to his countrymen rather than to their enemies. You must take care to have the word *caused*, in the last line but one, spelt rightly, and not *caus'd*.

I know nothing of the Parliament but what you saw in the papers. I came hither yesterday, and am transported, like you, with the beauty of the country; ay, and with its perfumed air too. The *lilac-tide* scents even the insides of the rooms.

I desired Lady Aylesbury to carry you Lord Melcombe's 'Diary.'[2] It is curious indeed; not so much from the secrets it blabs, which are rather characteristic than novel, but from the wonderful folly of the author, who was so fond of talking of himself, that he tells all he knew of himself, though scarce an event that does not betray his profligacy; and (which is still more surprising that he should disclose) almost every one exposes the contempt in which he was held,

[1] An epitaph for the monument erected by the States of Jersey to the memory of Major Pearson, killed in the attack of that island by the French, in January 1781.—BERRY.

[2] See note at p. 479 of this volume.—CUNNINGHAM.

and his consequential disappointments and disgraces! Was ever any man the better for another's experience? What a lesson is here against versatility! I, who have lived through all the scenes unfolded, am entertained; but I should think that to younger readers half the book must be unintelligible. He explains nothing but the circumstances of his own situation; and, though he touches on many important periods, he leaves them undeveloped, and often undetermined. It is diverting to hear him rail at Lord Halifax and others, for the very kind of double-dealing which he relates coolly of himself in the next page. Had he gone backwards, he might have given half-a-dozen volumes of his own life, with similar anecdotes and variations. I am most surprised, that when self-love is the whole ground-work of the performance, there should be little or no attempt at shining as an author, though he was one. As he had so much wit too, I am amazed that not a feature of it appears. The discussion in the Appendix, on the late Prince's question for increase of allowance, is the only part in which there is sense or honesty. There is, in the imperfect account of Rochfort, a strong circumstance or two that pleased me much. There are many passages that will displease several others throughout.

Mr. Coxe's 'Travels'[1] are very different: plain, clear, sensible, instructive, and entertaining. It is a noble work, and precious to me who delight in quartos: the two volumes contain twelve hundred pages; I have already devoured a quarter, though I have had them but three days. [The rest of this letter is lost.]

2307. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 3, 1784.

As I was told two days ago that Mr. Duane is recovered, and still, as I heard nothing from Lucas or Sharpe, I yesterday wrote to the latter, complaining of the continuation of delay, though all points are agreed, and declaring I was ashamed of seeing Cavalier Mozzi so incessantly ill-treated. That night I found a letter on my table from Sharpe,—not an answer to mine, which he could not have received; but one to tell me that he had the day before had a letter from the Cavalier, consenting to all their demands, and pro-

[1] 'Travels in Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, interspersed with Historical Relations and Political Inquiries; by William Coxe, M.A.,' in two volumes quarto.—Wright.

mising to send the necessary order on the following Saturday. Sharpe adds these words: "In the mean time Mr. Lucas and I have prepared a writing for the mutual discharge of all demands, which is now submitted to Mr. Duane's consideration."

Thus I suppose, *at last*, when all has been extorted that can be, those honest gentlemen will let the Cavalier receive his remaining pittance; though, no doubt, Lucas will not be very expeditious, if he can help it, for fear of breaking his good old custom of being dilatory.

Well! but a letter was not all I found from Sharpe; it was accompanied by a very large snuff-box, and a request to inquire of *you* whether any letter of advice was sent by you to any person, or the bill of lading signed by the captain of the Swedish ship the 'Esperance' (the captain's name Lingdeen), to whom was consigned, in January 1782, the portrait of Lord Clinton, by Vandyck, which, the Cavalier says, in April last was addressed to your nephew for my Lord, and of which my Lord has yet heard nothing more. Oh! but now comes the curious part! The snuff-box, which is a black tortoise-shell one, contains an uncommonly large enamel portrait, by Zincke, of Lady Orford, painted, I suppose early, for my brother Orford. The features are extremely like; the countenance not at all so: on the neck is a flaw from the furnace. If I was surprised at its being sent to *me*, I was not less at its real destination. It was sent to me, says Sharpe, by his Lordship, either to be forwarded to the Cavalier in return (for the Lord Clinton), or to have it copied in oil to the size of life three-quarters; "but I know no hand," continues he, "that I think can do that to any advantage." He then asks my opinion, as it is supposed the Cavalier would prefer a portrait near to the size of life. A more absurd or indelicate thought never entered into the head of man; but, indeed, it is a madman's head! I did *not* reply, that I concluded the Cavalier, had he wished for a portrait of my Lady, might have obtained one from her, and could not wish for one painted fifty years ago. I did just hint, that it would be a very *odd* present from *my Lord* to the *Cavalier*, but said I did not presume to give advice: that for a copy, the picture which has no merit but in the excellence of the enamel, would make a woful appearance in oil; for it is in the plain barren manner of that time, totally void of ornament and grace. And so I sent it back to let the cabal decide, whose delicacy I do not doubt will decide for sending the original; especially as a copy, or any other present, would cost a few guineas, which they had rather get for

themselves. However, it became me to object to the impropriety of giving away his mother's picture, and to *the person* in the world to whom *he* should not send it—and there I shall leave it!

Your nephew, I depend upon it, has been with you some time, and satisfied you in all you could wish to know. The new Parliament, as the papers will have told you, and as the progress of the elections foretold, is decidedly with the Court.[1] Nothing extraordinary has passed there or anywhere else. The House of Commons is occupied by the Westminster election, and sat on it till six this morning; nor yet is it finished. You know, I cannot bear election contests, nor ever inform myself of their circumstances. In truth, I am very ignorant of what is passing. I have been settled here this fortnight, though two dreary wet days drove me to town; but I returned to-day, and shall stay here if the weather is tolerable, though London is brimfull—but then it is brimfull of balls, shows, breakfasts, and joys, to which my age says No, and my want of inclination a treble No. It is my felicity to have remembered how ridiculous I have formerly thought old people who forgot their own age when everybody else did not; and it is lucky too that I feel no disposition that can lead me into absurdities. The present world might be my grandchildren; as they are not, I have nothing to do with them. I am glad they are amused, but neither envy nor wish to partake of their pleasures or their business. When one preserves one's senses and faculties, and suffers no pain, old age would be no grievance but for one; yet oh! that one is a heavy calamity—the surviving one's friends: nay, even the loss of one's contemporaries is something! at least, I cannot feel interested about a generation that I do not know.

I felt this very sensibly last week. I have no taste for, and scarce ever read, the pamphlets and political letters in the newspapers; but I cannot describe the avidity with which I devoured a new publication. A nephew of Lord Melcombe's heir has published that Lord's 'Diary.'[2] Indeed, it commences in 1749, and I grieve it was not dated twenty years earlier. However, it deals in topics that are ten times more familiar and fresh to my memory than any

[1] The Opposition moved an amendment to the address, which was supported by only 114 votes against 282.—Walpole.

[2] It is generally named 'Dodington's Memoirs.'—Walpole. See Walpole's account of George Bubb Dodington, Lord Melcombe, in the Appendix to vol. i. (p. 505) of the quarto edition of Walpole's *Mémoires* of George II., there printed from Walpole's MS. note in his own copy of 'Dodington's Diary.' See also Walpole's Works, vol. i. pp. 458, 531.—Cunningham.

passage that has happened within these six months. I wish I could convey it to you. Though drawn by his own hand, and certainly meant to flatter himself, it is a truer portrait than any of his hirelings would have given. Never was such a composition of vanity, versatility, and servility! In short, there is but one feature wanting —his wit, of which in his whole book there are not three sallies. I often said of Lord Hervey and Dodington, that they were the only two I ever knew who were always aiming at wit, and yet generally found it. There is one light in which the book pleases *me* particularly; it fully justifies the unfavourable opinion I always had of the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pelham, and which was thought such heresy during their lives.

I have somehow or other made out a longer letter than I expected. My correspondence in summer has commonly been barren, and probably will not be luxuriant in this, though the Parliament will be sitting: but I shall know no more than the newspapers tell me; and they are grown so communicative, that you may draw from the fountains, without my purloining a pitcher here and there to send you. Adieu!

2308. TO THE COUNTESS OF AYLESBURY.

Strawberry Hill, Tuesday night, June 8, 1784.

You frightened me for a minute, my dear Madam; but every letter since has given me pleasure, by telling how rapidly you recovered, and how perfectly well you are again. Pray, however, do not give me any more such joys. I shall be quite content with your remaining immortal, without the foil of any alarm. You gave all your friends a panic, and may trust their attachment without renewing it. I received as many inquiries the next day as if an Archbishop was in danger, and all the Bench hoped he was going to heaven.

Mr. Conway wonders I do not talk of Voltaire's 'Memoirs.' Lord bless me! I saw it two months ago; the Lucans brought it from Paris and lent it to me: nay, and I have seen most of it before; and I believe this an imperfect copy, for it ends no how at all. Besides, it was quite out of my head. Lord Melcombe's 'Diary' put that and everything else out of my mind. I wonder much more at Mr. Conway's not talking of this! It gossips about the living as familiarly as a modern newspaper. I long to hear

what * * * * says about it. I wish the Newspapers were as accurate! They have been circumstantial about *Lady Walsingham's* birth-day clothes,[1] which to be sure one is glad to know, only unluckily there is no such person. However, I dare to say that her dress was very becoming, and that she looked charmingly.

The month of June, according to custom immemorial, is as cold as Christmas. I had a fire last night, and all my rose-buds, I believe, would have been very glad to sit by it. I have other grievances to boot; but as they are annuals too,—*videlicet*, people to see my house, —I will not torment your Ladyship with them: yet I know nothing else. None of my neighbours are come into the country yet: one would think all the dowagers were elected into the new Parliament. Adieu, my dear Madam![2]

2309. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 19, 1784.

You are very obliging, Madam, to embrace any opportunity of reviving our correspondence, and still more kind on that you have taken. I am, indeed, very happy in Lady Chewton's safety. I am pleased, too, that she has a boy, as it pleases her and Lord Chewton; nor do I wish her to encumber him with a bevy of indigent infantas; but alas! what is an heir where there is so little to inherit? Lord Chewton has every amiable virtue that man can have; but virtues are like the pipkins used by chemists in search of the philosopher's stone, which are very worthy utensils when employed in humble offices, but mighty apt to crack in pursuit of gold; and, therefore, I neither believe nor desire that he would go upon the process. I went to town on Tuesday to inquire after her; and that is all I know of London. I have been constantly here, where there is nothing to know, but that it is cold when it should be hot, and that

[1] Meaning Mrs. Boyle Walsingham. Charlotte, daughter of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, Bart., married to the Hon. Robert Boyle Walsingham.—Wright.

[2] This is the last of Walpole's printed letters to the daughter of Mary Bellenden, and the wife of his cousin and favourite, Mr. Conway. "You, sir, have also had an agreeable lady at your house, who has the further advantage of youth and beauty—I mean the Countess of Aylesbury; whose charms and whose conduct have always been equally admired by those I have heard speak of her. I have been told she was a lover of retirement in her old lord's time: I do not know what she may be in her young Colonel's. She is, you know, daughter to General Campbell and to Miss Bellenden, who was so celebrated when maid of honour to Queen Caroline. It is no wonder, then, that she is pleasing." *Lady Luxborough to Shenstone, Aug.* 31, 1750. —Cunningham.

there is as great plenty as if a board of seasons could carry on the business, and let the place of first commissioner be a sinecure to their principal, the sun. My absence from London has been the reason of my not waiting on Lady Ravensworth; which I certainly will on the first opportunity. If she could do me the honour of visiting Strawberry, it should be made as easy to her Ladyship as I could contrive; nor are there more than fifteen steps in two flights up to the Blue Room, and three more only to the Star Chamber. Will you, Madam, be so good as to negotiate this for me; and to say that in any case the young lady (whose name I don't know) may command a ticket for any morning she pleases, on giving me notice two or three days before, for you must know that I have been so tormented with visitants, and demands of breach of my rules and explanations, &c., that I have been forced to print a regulation, or, in fact, a memorial, in which I have positively declared I will not depart from my method. All my mornings are disturbed, and the money I have laid out to make my house agreeable to myself, has almost driven me out of it. Lady Ravensworth, on the contrary, if she comes herself, will have the contrary effect, for I will have the honour myself of showing it to her.

Captain Cook's 'Voyage' I have neither read nor intend to read. I have seen the prints—a parcel of ugly faces, with blubber lips and flat noses, dressed as unbecomingly as if both sexes were ladies of the first fashion; and rows of savages, with backgrounds of palm-trees. Indeed I shall not give five guineas and a half—nay, they sell already for nine, for such uncouth lubbers; nor do I desire to know how unpolished the north or south poles have remained ever since Adam and Eve were just such mortals. My brother's death has made me poor, and I cannot now afford to buy every thing I see. It is late, to be sure, to learn economy, but I must do it, though a little grievous, as I never was able to say the multiplication table. Well! before I come to the Rule of Three it will be all over; and then an obolus will serve to pay the ferryman. How he will stare if I cry, "No, stay, I cannot give you that; it is a Queen Anne's farthing."

I rejoice in Lady Gertrude's recovery, who I really thought looked very ill. I cannot say so of Lord Ossory, and yet I am glad he is better, if he wanted to recover—though he is so healthy that I believe he only took his anxiety for her for an ague. The young and robust are surprised at any uneasy sensation, and conclude it illness. On the contrary, we ancient invalids try to persuade

ourselves that any cessation of pain promises an entire cure—and so we die, just when we imagine we have taken a new lease.

2310. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, June 25, 1784.

I CAN answer you very readily in your own tone, that is, about weather and country grievances, and without one word of news or politics; for I know neither, nor inquire of them.[1] I am very well content to be a Strulbrug, and to *exist* after I have done *being:* and I am still better pleased that you are in the same way of thinking, or of not thinking; for I am sure both your health and your mind will find the benefits of living for yourself and family only. It were not fit that the young should concentre themselves in so narrow a circle; nor do the young seem to have any such intention. Let them mend or mar the world as they please; the world takes its own way upon the whole: and, though there may be an uncommon swarm of animalculæ for a season, things return into their own channel from their own bias, before any effectual nostrum of fumigation is discovered. In the mean time, I am for giving all due weight to local grievances, though with no natural turn towards attending to them: but they serve for conversation. We have no newly-invented grubs to eat our fruit; indeed, I have no fruit to be eaten: but I should not lament if the worms would eat my gardener, who, you know, is so bad an one that I never have anything in my garden.

I am now waiting for dry weather to cut my hay; though nature certainly never intended hay should be cut dry, as it always rains all June. But here is a worse calamity; one is never safe by day or night: Mrs. Walsingham, who has bought your brother's late house at Ditton, was robbed a few days ago in the high road, within a mile of home, at *seven* in the evening. The *dii minorum gentium* pilfer everything. Last night they stole a couple of yards of lead off the pediment of the door of my cottage. A gentleman at Putney, who has three men-servants, had his house broken open

[1] "As politics spoil all conversation, Mr. Walpole, the other night, proposed that everybody should forfeit half-a-crown who said anything tending to introduce the idea either of ministers or opposition. I added, that whoever even mentioned *pit*-coal or a *fox*-skin muff should be considered as guilty; and it was accordingly voted." *Hannah More, March* 8, 1784.—WRIGHT.

last week, and lost some fine miniatures, which he valued so much that he would not hang them up. You may imagine what a pain this gives me in my baubles! I have been making the round of my fortifications this morning, and ordering new works.

I am concerned for the account you give me of your brother. Life does not appear to be such a jewel as to preserve it carefully for its own sake. I think the same of its *good things:* if they do not procure amusement or comfort, I doubt they only produce the contrary. Yet it is silly to repine; for, probably, whatever any man does by choice, he knows will please him best, or at least will prevent greater uneasiness. I, therefore, rather retract my concern; for, with a vast fortune, Lord Hertford might certainly do what he would: and if, at his age, he can wish for more than that fortune will obtain, I may pity his taste or temper; but I shall think that you and I are much happier who can find enjoyments in an humbler sphere, nor envy those who have no time for trifling. I who have never done anything else, am not at all weary of my occupation. Even three days of continued rain have not put me out of humour or spirits. *C'est beaucoup dire* for an *Anglais.* Adieu!

2311. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, June 30, 1784.

Instead of coming to you, I am thinking of packing up and going to town for winter, so desperate is the weather! I found a great fire at Mrs. Clive's this evening, and Mr. Raftor hanging over it like a smoked ham. They tell me my hay will be all spoiled for want of cutting; but I had rather it should be destroyed by standing than by being mowed, as the former will cost me nothing but the crop, and 'tis very dear to make nothing but a water-souchy of it.

You know I have lost a niece, and found another nephew: he makes the fifty-fourth, reckoning both sexes. We are certainly an affectionate family, for of late we do nothing but marry one another. Have not you felt a little twinge in a remote corner of your heart on Lady Harrington's death?[1] She dreaded death so extremely that

[1] Lady Caroline Fitzroy, daughter of Charles second Duke of Grafton, married, 1746, William Stanhope, second Earl of Harrington (died 1779). Walpole describes her, at the time of her marriage, as "one of our first beauties." She was a widow at the time of her death, and was buried at Kensington. See Walpole's note in vol. i. p. 312.—Cunningham.

I am glad she had not a moment to be sensible of it. I have a great affection for sudden deaths; they save oneself and everybody else a deal of ceremony.

The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough breakfasted here on Monday, and seemed much pleased, though it rained the whole time with an Egyptian darkness. I should have thought there had been deluges enough to destroy all Egypt's other plagues: but the newspapers talk of locusts; I suppose relations of your beetles, though probably not so fond of green fruit; for the scene of their campaign is Queen-square, Westminster, where there certainly has not been an orchard since the reign of Canute.

I have, at last, seen an air-balloon; just as I once did see a tiny review, by passing one accidentally on Hounslow-heath. I was going last night to Lady Onslow at Richmond, and over Mr. Cambridge's field I saw a bundle in the air not bigger than the moon,[1] and she herself could not have descended with more composure if she had expected to find Endymion fast asleep. It seemed to 'light on Richmond-hill; but Mrs. Hobart was going by, and her *coiffure* prevented my seeing it alight. The papers say, that a balloon has been made at Paris representing the castle of Stockholm, in compliment to the King of Sweden; but that they are afraid to let it off: so, I suppose, it will be served up to him in a dessert. No great progress, surely, is made in these airy navigations, if they are still afraid of risking the necks of two or three subjects for the entertainment of a visiting sovereign. There is seldom a *feu de joie* for the birth of a Dauphin that does not cost more lives. I thought royalty and science never haggled about the value of blood when experiments are in the question.

I shall wait for summer before I make you a visit. Though I dare to say that you have converted your smoke-kilns into a manufacture of balloons, pray do not erect a Strawberry castle in the air for my reception, if it will cost a pismire a hair of its head. Good night! I have ordered my bed to be heated as hot as an oven, and Tonton and I must go into it.

[1] "Lunardi's nest," says Hannah More, "when I saw it yesterday, looking like a peg-top, seemed, I assure you, higher than the moon, 'riding towards her highest noon.'"—WRIGHT.

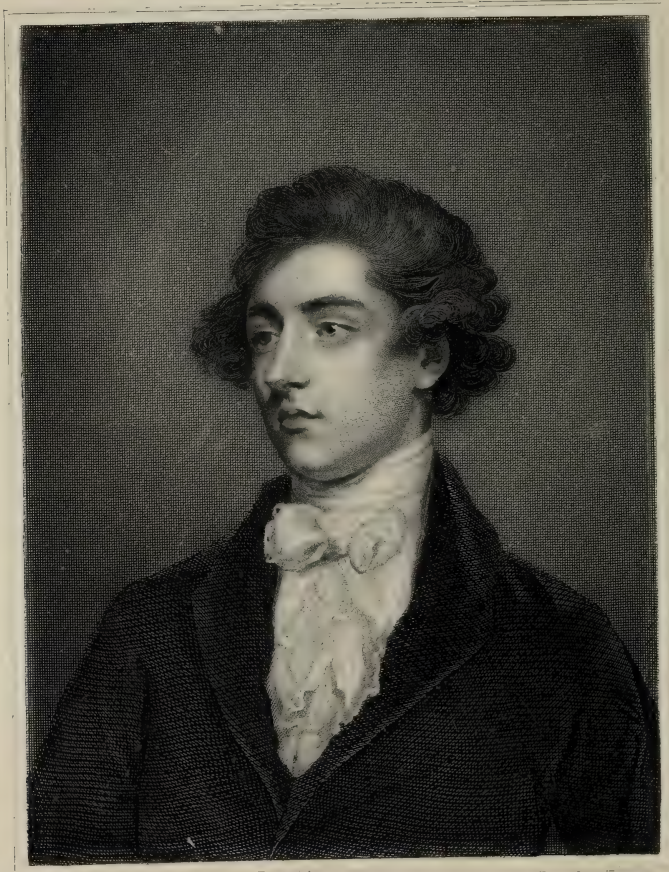
2312. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 8, 1784.

I HAVE delayed and delayed writing, in hopes of being able to send you the completion of Cavalier Mozzi's business; but at last I have lost my patience, as I suppose he has. Lucas is intolerable. I sent him word of it the moment I received the order on Mr. Hoare. Lucas desired to see a copy of it: I sent it. He said, Mr. Hoare must have it before he (Lucas) could withdraw the caveat: but Lucas had stayed some time before he gave me that notice. I replied, I would deliver the order, if Mr. Hoare would engage to restore it to me, provided he, Lucas, should start any new difficulties; but would not part with it out of my hands till everything was ready for conclusion: and I did express resentment at his endeavouring to represent me as the cause of the delay. I said, I had learnt circumspection from him, and gave him plainly to understand that I would not *trust him* with the order; in which I believe I was very much in the right. He begged my pardon, and pretended to have had great difficulties in waiving his own scruples—I don't know about what. Still, I hear nothing from him, though I told him, near a fortnight ago, that I would meet him and Mr. Hoare, &c., in town, whenever they would give me notice they were ready. I comprehend nothing of all this. I am surprised Lucas is not impatient to finger his booty; but his invincible slowness, in which, somehow or other, he thinks he finds his account, is perhaps the sole cause; for I do not see how he can possibly hope to extort more from Mozzi than he has done. You may depend upon hearing, the moment the affair is terminated.

This letter is merely written to explain my silence to poor Mozzi. I know no news, public or private. The Parliament sits, but only on necessary business. There is much noise about a variety of new taxes, yet only few have a right to complain of them.[1] The majority of the nation persisted in approving and calling for the American war, and ought to swallow the heavy consequences in silence. Instead of our colonies and trade, we have a debt of two

[1] The budget comprised a loan of six millions, which was obtained on very favourable terms, and an increase of the window-tax, to make up for a reduction of the duties on tea.—WALPOLE.



hundred and fourscore millions! Half of that enormous burthen our *wise* country-gentlemen have acquired, instead of an alleviation of the Land-tax, which they were such boobies as to expect from the prosecution of the war! Posterity will perhaps discover what his own age would not see, that my father's motto, *Quieta non movere*, was a golden sentence; but what avail retrospects?

Pray tell me if you know anything of a very thin book lately printed at Florence, called 'The Arno Miscellany,' said to be printed at the Stamperia Bonducciana; and what does that mean? The Abbé Bonducci I thought dead many years ago; yet that term, and the style of the work, seems to allude to his buffoonery.[1] The paper, impression, and binding, I will swear, are Florentine. This dab was left at my house in town without a name. It consists of some pretended translations and odes by (pretended) initials, though I suppose all by the same hand. The two last are a pastoral and an ode that are perfect nonsense; designedly nonsensical, no doubt; yet undesignedly too, for they have no humour, or at least no originality, being copies of Swift's ballad, 'Mild Arcadians, ever blooming:' and certainly nothing is so easy as to mismatch substantives and adjectives, when the idea has once been started. The last ode seems to be meant to ridicule Gray's magnificent Odes, and in truth is better than the serious pieces; for a thousand persons can mimic an actor, who cannot act themselves. I imagine the whole to be the work of young Beckford.[2] He is just returned from Italy.

One of my hundred nieces has just married herself by an expedition to Scotland. It is Mrs. Keppel's second daughter;[3] a beautiful girl, and more universally admired than her sister or cousins the Waldegraves. For such an exploit her choice is not a very bad one; the swain is eldest son of Lord Southampton.[4] Mrs. Keppel has been persuaded to pardon her, but Lady Southampton is inexorable; nor can I quite blame her, for she has thirteen other children, and a fortune was very requisite; but both

[1] This was a slip of memory. Mr. Walpole, in 1740, had been acquainted at Florence with the Abbés Bonducci and Buondelmonte: the latter was the wit and mimic; the other had taught Mr. Gray Italian. In this letter Mr. Walpole had confounded them.—Walpole.

[2] The celebrated author of 'Vathek,' and of 'Italy, Spain, and Portugal; with an Excursion to the Monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha.'—Wright.

[3] Laura, second daughter of Dr. Frederic Keppel, Bishop of Exeter, by Laura, eldest daughter of Sir Edward Walpole.—Walpole.

[4] Lord Southampton was grandson of the Duke of Grafton; the Bishop of Exeter's mother was Lady Anne Lenox, daughter of the first Duke of Richmond.—Walpole.

the bride and bridegroom are descendants of Charles II., from whom they probably inherit stronger impulses than a spirit of collateral calculation.

Another of the Fitzroys is dead, the Dowager Lady Harrington, who in the predominant characteristic of the founders of her line certainly did not degenerate in her day from the King [Charles II.] her grandfather, or her grandam the Duchess of Cleveland.

Adieu! I hope you will hear from me again very soon; but I answer for nothing that depends on Lucas. One would think he had been the inventor of the game of chess.

2313. TO SIR HORACE MANN

July 10, 1784.

The very night on which I sent my letter for you to town, complaining of Lucas's tediousness, I received one,—not from him, but from Mr. Sharpe,—telling me that Mr. Hoare *had* paid the money to my Lord, who had executed a full discharge to Cavalier Mozzi, one part of which was lodged with Mr. Hoare, and the other part, or duplicate, he, Sharpe, had sent to me, *as he apprehended the Chevalier had desired him to do*, in hopes that I might find some favourable opportunity of conveying it to you; and, as the Chevalier must execute a counter-part, he had sent that to me too, and had himself written to Mozzi to acquaint him with the termination, and in what manner he must execute the deed. Thus the same post will convey my complaint of the delay, and Sharpe's account of the conclusion: however, this will explain the contradiction. But what will explain Lucas's conduct? He would not withdraw the caveat till Mr. Hoare had the order; and yet Mr. Hoare pays the money without that order, of which he has seen nothing but a copy! This may be law—it is not common sense.

What do you think, too, of Lucas's impertinence to me? I was referee; I have made no decision in form; I offered to meet all the parties, to settle and conclude the whole business: and then Lucas, without taking notice of me, concludes the whole without me! A footman would have been treated with less disrespect; they would at least have told him they did not want him. I have written a word of resentment to Sharpe; but do not mention it to Mozzi, lest he should suspect any informality, and not yet be easy.

I do not doubt but they have acted legally, and only chose to affront *me* after all the trouble I have had. They never omit any opportunity of egging the poor madman to insult me. I wish that was all: I despise such wretches; but I am not indifferent to being kept out of even the interest of my fortune. But I shall not trouble you with my own grievances; indeed, they do not sit heavy. I am arrived too near the term when grievances or joys will be equally shadows passed away, not to consider either but as the colours of a moment. A prospect of suffering long may poison even the present hour; but it were weak indeed to be much affected by injuries that arrive at the end of one's course: one is within reach of the great panacea which delivers one from the power of the most malevolent. Old age is like dipping one in Styx; not above the breadth of one's heel is left vulnerable. I perceive this numbness even to bodily pain. Some years ago the dread of a fit of the gout soured even the intervals; now, if the apprehension occurs, I say to myself, "Is not it full as probable that I shall be laid out as be laid up? then why anticipate what may never happen?" My dear Sir, life is like a chess-board,—the white spaces and the black are close together: it does not signify of which hue the last square is; the border closes all!

12*th.*

Well! I have received a note from Lucas, to tell me he had desired Mr. Sharpe to give me intelligence of the conclusion, and that Mr. Hoare *now* ought to have the order—if I please to deliver it. This, you see, is again to imply blame on me, as if I could have had any reason for detaining the order, but from a caution which in justice I owed to Cavalier Mozzi. Does any one give up an order on a banker, unless he is ready to pay the money? Nor indeed did I know till now that a banker would pay money on the *copy* of an order. It is all a juggle that I do not comprehend: perhaps it is not irreputable not to understand all the tricks of such an attorney as Lucas.

I can plainly see that he and his associates are willing to censure me for ends for which they would always have pretended some reasons or other; and it is not improbable but that was an inducement to employ me as referee. Lucas knew I disapproved of his instigating my Lord to contest his mother's will; and, because I have said what I owed in justice to Mozzi, he will have represented me as partial to one for whom in reality I could have no partiality, though I certainly would not be influenced by any prejudice against

him. I smile at all their plots, and am not fool enough to entertain myself with such improbable visions as they may think I indulge; though my whole conduct, and the little management I have had for the crew, proves how far I am from having a grain of such weakness.

I trust, my dear Sir, that this is the last letter I shall write to you on the subject of Mozzi. Sharpe's expression, of apprehending the Chevalier meant the deed should be deposited with *me*, looks as if he had expected it himself; or that he is in the plot of representing me as acting in concert with Mozzi. On the other hand, I should not be surprised if Mozzi, from the unfavourableness of the decision, should suspect me of having acted too partially towards my Lord. I cannot help it if he does.

It will be some comfort to reflect, that, if I have dissatisfied both sides, it is a presumption that I have not been very partial to either. At Mozzi I shall not wonder. From the other side I have never met but ingratitude, distrust, and ill-usage, in return for behaviour, I will dare to say, unparalleled in tenderness, care, attention to his interest, and most scrupulous integrity. Should it ever come to the test, I know what my reward would be. Adieu!

2314. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 6, 1784.

I AM very sorry, my dear Lord, that I must answer your Lordship's letter by a condolence. I had not the honour of being acquainted with Mrs. Vyse,[1] but have heard so much good of her, that it is impossible not to lament her.

Since this month began we have had fine weather; and 'twere great pity if we had not, when the earth is covered with such abundant harvests! They talk of an earthquake having been felt in London. Had Sir William Hamilton been there, he would think the town gave itself great airs. He, I believe, is *putting up* volcanos in his own country. In my youth, philosophers were eager to ascribe every uncommon discovery to the Deluge; now it is the fashion to solve every appearance by conflagrations. If there was such an inundation upon the earth, and such a furnace under it, I am

[1] Mrs. Vyse, daughter of Sir George Howard, K.B., and wife of Colonel Vyse; died 2nd Aug., 1784.—CUNNINGHAM.

amazed that Noah and company were not boiled to death. Indeed, I am a great sceptic about human reasonings; they predominate only for a time, like other mortal fashions, and are so often exploded after the mode is passed, that I hold them little more serious, though they call themselves wisdom. How many have I lived to see established and confuted! For instance, the necessity of a southern continent, as a balance was supposed to be unanswerable; and so it was, till Captain Cook found there was no such thing. We are poor silly animals: we live for an instant upon a particle of a boundless universe, and are much like a butterfly that should argue about the nature of the seasons and what creates their vicissitudes, and does not exist itself to see one annual revolution of them!

Adieu, my dear Lord! If my reveries are foolish, remember, I give them for no better. If I depreciate human wisdom, I am sure I do not assume a grain to myself; nor have anything to value myself upon more than being your Lordship's most obliged humble servant.

2315. TO MR. JAMES DODSLEY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 8, 1784.

I MUST beg, Sir, that you will tell Mr. Pinkerton that I am much obliged to him for the honour he is willing to do me, though I must desire his leave to decline it. His book[1] deserves an eminent patron: I am too inconsiderable to give any relief to it, and even in its own line am unworthy to be distinguished. One of my first pursuits was a collection of medals; but I early gave it over, as I could not afford many branches of *virtù*, and have since changed or given away several of my best Greek and Roman medals. What remain, I shall be glad to show Mr. Pinkerton; and, if it would not be inconvenient to him to come hither any morning by eleven o'clock, after next Thursday, that he will appoint, he shall not only see my medals, but any other baubles here that can amuse him. I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

[1] The first edition of Pinkerton's 'Essay on Medals' was published by Dodsley in two volumes octavo, in this year, without the name of the author.—WRIGHT.

2316. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 9, 1784.

Yours of the 24th of July, which I have just received, tells me that Cavalier Mozzi is much disappointed at the small sum he is to receive on the winding-up of his affair. I am not surprised, and can only tell him what I have said to my nephew; from whom I have, to *my* great surprise, received a letter of thanks, but saying that Cavalier Mozzi must be satisfied, as many points had been given up. I replied, "That I had done but my duty in undertaking the arbitration, to prevent a very disagreeable discussion in a public court; that I confessed I had favoured Mozzi to the utmost of my power, as far as I thought I might; that *he*, a stranger, and not acquainted with even his own lawyer or referee, might not think himself betrayed; and that I had done it the rather, lest he should suspect me of partiality too; that, for thanks, his Lordship owed me none; as I owned, that, if Mr. Duane had not given his opinion so much in favour of his Lordship, I should have been inclined to allow him less; and, consequently, I could not agree that any rights had been ceded on that side."

I do not doubt but Lucas had already acquainted him with what I have said, though, perhaps, neither the one nor the other expected I should be so frank. I did not expect to content either party, nor have even contented myself; but I could not act otherwise than I have done. And, as Cavalier Mozzi would not be persuaded by anything I could urge to come over, he must blame himself, if his cause has not been better defended.

The history of Count Albani's daughter is no news to me;[1] I knew it from a physician[2] who attended her at Paris: but you mistake the name of the mother, which was Walkinshaw, not Walsingham, and who has a sister now living, that was Woman of the Bedchamber to the late Princess of Wales. The family of

[1] The Pretender had just acknowledged his natural daughter, declared her his heiress, and pretended to create her Duchess of Albany. He sent this declaration to be registered at Paris.—Walpole.

[2] Dr. Gem, an English physician, settled at Paris. She had been educated in a convent in Paris, and at this time resided *en pension*, under the name of Lady Charlotte Stuart. The Pretender was desirous that she should reside with him in Florence, where he purposed to marry her to some Florentine noble.—Walpole.

Fitzjames have always opposed the acknowledgment of the daughter, lest on her father's death they should be obliged to maintain her in a greater style than they wished.

I asked you a question in my last, about some poems lately printed at Florence: I know now that I did guess the right author.[1]

I know no news, public or private. We have had, and it still continues, a most dismal summer; not only wet, but so cold, that for these two evenings I have had a fire. The rage of air-balloons still continues, both here and in France. The Duc de Chartres[2] made a campaign in one, that did not redound to his glory more than his former one by sea. As he has miscarried on three elements, he should try if he could purify himself by the fourth. He is now in England for the third time.

I have been writing to you this morning, but you will not receive my letter immediately. It is to recommend Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's only son,[3] who is on his travels. The grandfather[4] was my father's most intimate friend, and the late Lord[5] a friend of mine; and with the present I have been much acquainted from a boy; consequently, I should wish you to be kind to the son, even if you were not always disposed to be so. But I have been so unlucky in my *protegés*, and your goodness has been so thrown away upon them, that I desire no work of supererogation on my account. The son of an English peer, whose father has a considerable office, is entitled to attentions enough; but, after Mr. Windham, I will never trust any man with particular credentials, nor will expose you to rudeness by beseeching you to fling your pearls before swine. I even restrain myself from recommending the gentleman who travels with Mr. Edgcumbe, though I

[1] Mr. Walpole was misinformed; at least, it is not certain that Mr. Beckford had any hand in those poems which were written in concert by the persons whose initials are prefixed. "M." was Captain Merry, who had been in the Horse-guards, sold out, and retired to Florence. The second was old Allan Ramsay, the painter and author, son of Allan Ramsay, the Scotch poet. The son, who died at Dover about this time, on his return from Italy, whither he had been for his health, brought over some copies of these poems, and had ordered, or intended, a copy to be sent to Mr. Walpole, who from his family probably received it. The third was one Buignon, a Swiss governor to Mr. Dawkins.—Walpole.

[2] Afterwards Duke of Orleans, and unhappily distinguished in the French revolution as Philip Egalité. He was the father of Louis Philippe, late King of the French. On the 15th of July, 1784, he ascended from the park of St. Cloud in a balloon, with three companions, and after a very perilous voyage descended safely.—Wright.

[3] George, third Lord Edgcumbe, created Viscount Mount-Edgcumbe by George III. He was an admiral, and Captain of the Band of Pensioners.—Walpole.

[4] Richard, the first baron created by George II., had been Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.—Walpole.

[5] Richard, second baron, was comptroller of the household to George II.—Walpole.

think him a sensible, prudent young man. I did recommend him to Lord Mount-Edgcumbe. He is a youngish French Protestant, of a very good gentleman's family, and left the service on, I believe, an affair of honour. He was addressed to the Duke of Richmond and to me, by the Prince de Bauffremont, in the strongest terms imaginable. He passed three years in this country in a manner that fully justified his character. He speaks and writes English well; his name is De Soyres. It was not in my power to serve him but in the manner I did; and he gives great satisfaction in his present situation. As the Mentor is so much a gentleman, I hope the Telemachus will give you no trouble. But, were it Minerva herself, I prefer your peace; and therefore pray lay yourself out in no attentions beyond what you find received with "reciprocity."[1] Your nephew, I hope, is not leaving you yet; in him, I am sure, neither you nor I shall be disappointed. Adieu![2]

[1] A term used by Lord Shelburne on the peace with America, and much ridiculed at that time.—WALPOLE.

[2] Sir Horace Mann thus writes to Walpole at this time; "I have not heard anything more relating to the daughter of Count Albany and Mrs. Walkinshaw; but it is said in his family that she is expected here [Florence] soon, and that the delay is owing to the preparations necessary to equip her out properly to appear, first at Paris, and then here, under the new title her father has given her of Duchesse d'Albany. She is not to be accompanied by her mother, who would disgrace her, but by some great lady, who must ask that honour as *dame de compagnie*, as the discarded countess has, who is a *chanoinesse* and sister of a Prince Malsan. It will require time to settle all these matters, and, after all, there may be some difficulty in the etiquette. If the count has not erred in his calculations, the family of Fitzjames need not be under any apprehension of their *cousine* being a future expense to them, for the count purposes to marry her here, not indeed to one of the Archdukes, but to a Florentine nobleman, and to leave her twelve thousand crowns a year,—a sum which would tempt any of them more than the tincture of royalty. I know the little book which was left at your house; it was composed in my neighbourhood by the persons indicated by the initials affixed to each performance, Merry and Ramsay. The first was known in England by the name of Captain, as he was then in the Horse-guards, but has since sold out, and has resided here some years. Ramsay's name is well known to you both by his pen and pencil; he was in a decrepit state here, and died lately at Dover on his way to London to meet General Campbell, who married his daughter, on their return from Jamaica. The third is a Swiss governor of a Mr. Dawkins, named Buignon. Mr. Ramsay promised me to cut out the last performance from all the copies he proposed to send to England, to be distributed by his sister as a tribute to his learned friends or patrons. I formerly knew Lord Mount-Edgecumbe, and shall be glad to see his son. You interpreted what I wrote of Mr. Windham too severely. I was only offended at the violence of his political sentiments, and the great indiscretion with which he spoke of the king, and all those whom I was obliged to respect." *From an unpublished Letter.*—WRIGHT.

2317. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 14, 1784.

As Lady Cecilia Johnston offers to be postman, I cannot resist writing a line, though I have not a word to say. In good sooth, I know nothing, hear of nothing but robberies and housebreaking; consequently never think of Ministers, India Directors, and such honest men. Mrs. Clive has been broken open, and Mr. Raftor miscarried and died of the fright. Lady Browne has lost all her liveries and her temper, and Lady Blandford has cried her eyes out on losing a lurch and almost her wig. In short, as I do not love exaggeration, I do not believe there have been above threescore highway robberies within this week, fifty-seven houses that have been broken open, and two hundred and thirty that are to be stripped on the first opportunity. We are in great hopes, however, that the King of Spain, now he has demolished Algiers, the metropolitan see of thieves, will come and bombard Richmond, Twickenham, Hampton Court, and all the suffragan cities that swarm with pirates and banditti, as he has a better knack at destroying vagabonds than at recovering his own.

Ireland is in a blessed way; and, as if the climate infected everybody that sets foot there, the viceroy's aides-de-camp have blundered into a riot, that will set all the humours afloat. I wish you joy of the summer being come now it is gone, which is better than not coming at all. I hope Lady Cecilia will return with an account of your all being perfectly well. Adieu!

2318. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug 19, 1784.

I was not alert, I own, Madam, in answering your Ladyship's last note, and I thought, for tolerable reasons. I am so superannuated, so antiquated, that it is impossible my letters should entertain you; and I did suspect that, with all your civility, *you* felt what *I* know. You might have other reasons, too, for letting a correspondence languish which my unreasonable length of life has protracted longer than you could expect. I am always ready to do

justice on myself; and should always remember your past goodness, and approve your abridging it when it grows a tax rather than an amusement.

You did mention your intention of going to Kingsgate, but I had not heard of that journey taking place. I am not surprised at your liking it, for it is certainly singular, and in no light disagreeable. The situation is uncommon and cheerful, and the buildings and erections so odd, and so little resembling any one ever saw, that a view might, to those who were never there, be passed for a prospect in some half-civilised island discovered by Captain Cook, and, with leave of the editors, more novel than any in the new pompous publication. I am as little surprised that the place, after the first impression, should have excited a thousand less pleasing reflections —*there's room for meditation.*

The verses that Lady Ravensworth has in MS.,[1] have been frequently printed in magazines since, nay, and before Mr. Gray's death. I was very sorry that he wrote them, and ever gave a copy of them. You may be sure I did not recommend their being printed in his Works; nor were they.

I am glad your society is improved by Lady Ravensworth's company, and I hope all the three generations will return much amended in health. Though I am too indolent ever to try it, I have the highest opinion of sea air, and always in every illness determine to go to the coast; and as constantly neglect it when I am better, as if it was a qualm of conscience, that was dissipated by health. At present I am scandalously well, considering what a winter and what a summer there have been. Except three days at Park-place, I have not stirred hence. If I did, I should not sojourn in an inn at Margate! I have a notion my friend Mrs. Vesey is there, but I have no more intelligence from London than from Hindostan. Florence is the nearest spot whence I hear any news. The dying Pretender has acknowledged his natural daughter Lady Charlotte Stuart, and created her Duchess of Albany, and declared her his heiress. I heard a report some time ago in town, that his queen, as soon as she is dowager, intends to come to England and marry Alfieri, who is or was here, being sent out of Rome at the instance of the Cardinal of York. I don't know whether her royal highness, Lady Mary Coke, will visit her after such a *mésalliance*, though, having quarrelled with most of the

[1] On Lord Holland's house at Kingsgate, on the Kentish coast.—Cunningham.

sovereigns of Europe, it would be refreshing to have an intimacy with a royal relict.

Have you seen the 'Memoirs of Marshal Villars,' Madam? The two first volumes have many entertaining passages. The two latter are a little tedious, but to *me* very interesting, for they abuse my father—stay, let me account for this satisfaction. The Opposition wrote volumes to accuse him of being a tool to France, and governed by Cardinal Fleury; Marshal Villars is so good as to rail at the Cardinal for being governed and duped by my father. It is not living to no purpose, when I have reached to this vindication.

This summer has afforded me *two* such *amendes honorables*. In my earlier time I was almost proscribed for my contempt of the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pelham. Lord Melcombe's 'Diary' does not prove that I was so much in the wrong. It is comfortable to find that one does not *always* form judgments ill founded! and that one's opinions may grow fashionable when one is dead.

2319. TO JOHN PINKERTON, ESQ.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1784

I AM much obliged to you, Sir, for the pieces you have sent me of your own composition.[2] There is great poetic beauty and merit in them, with great knowledge of the ancient masters and of the best of the modern. You have talents that will succeed in whatever you pursue, and industry to neglect nothing that will improve them. Despise petty critics, and confute them by making your works as perfect as you can.

I am sorry you sent me the old manuscript; because, as I told you, I have so little time left to enjoy anything, that I should think myself a miser if I coveted for a moment what I must leave so soon.

I shall be very glad, Sir, to see you here again, whenever it is convenient to you. Lest I should forget the time, be so good as to acquaint me three or four days beforehand when you wish to come, that I may not be out of the way, and I will fix a day for expecting you.

[1] This is the first of the series of letters addressed by Mr. Walpole to Mr. Pinkerton. They are taken from Pinkerton's 'Literary Corespondence,' first printed in 1830, in two volumes octavo, by Dawson Turner, Esq.—WRIGHT.

[2] In 1781, Mr. Pinkerton had published an octavo volume called 'Rimes;' a second edition of which, with additions, appeared in the following year.—WRIGHT.

2320. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 25, 1784.

I THOUGHT I had done corresponding with you about Cavalier Mozzi; but here is a letter which you must deliver to him. Good Mr. Duane came to me two days ago, and insisted on my sending it. He protests that he declared at first to Mr. Sharpe that he would accept no reward for his trouble; that he undertook it to oblige Mr. Morice, and says he has had little trouble: and, though I thought it decent to press him to accept the draft, he would not hear of it; and it is here enclosed. I own I am charmed with his handsome behaviour; it confirms the character I gave of him when I recommended him to Cavalier Mozzi, and, I think, ought to convince the latter that Mr. Duane was clear in the judgment he pronounced. Still, I must regret that my Lord was advised to make the claim, and shall never be persuaded but that Lucas had multiplied documents that it was impossible to fathom without a waste of years; but which, if they could have been probed to the bottom, would not have stood the test. All the comfort that remains is, that the duration of a law-suit would probably have cost as much to Mozzi as he has now lost.

The Parliament is risen; and, having lasted so late in the year, is not likely to meet again till after Christmas. Consequently, no events are to be expected, unless the scene should grow very serious in Ireland, as it threatens; but it is to be hoped that our American experience has taught us discretion.

I interest myself little in novelties, but I own I have some remains of curiosity from ancient impressions. Pray send me the sequel of the Count Albany and Lady Charlotte Fitzcharles, his daughter, the new Duchess.[1] I shall like to know, too, whether the

[1] In a letter to Walpole, dated Florence, September 18th, Sir Horace Mann says, "The affair relating to Count Albany and his natural daughter is drawing to a conclusion. Lady Charlotte Stuart (not Fitz-Charles), to which her father has on this occasion added the title of Duchess of Albany, is supposed to be on the road hither, attended by two ladies and two gentlemen, and is expected in the beginning of next month. The count is very busy in furnishing his house with all the valuables that he has lately received from Rome that his father left, which are numerous and costly; besides these, he has received a large quantity of plate, and his share of his mother's jewels, except the great ruby, and one lesser, which were pawned by the republic of Poland for a very large sum to his grandfather Sobieski, with a power, it is said, of redeeming them in the space of a hundred years, which are nearly elapsed. These,

Cardinal assumes the royal title when his brother dies. I recollect but two King-Cardinals, Henry of Portugal and the Cardinal of Bourbon, whom the League called Charles the Tenth, but who attained the crown no more than the Cardinal of York will do. If the Count himself has any feeling left, he must rejoice to hear that the descendants of many of his martyrs are to be restored to their forfeited estates in Scotland, by an Act just passed.

As this was meant but for a cover to the enclosed, I will not pique myself on making it longer, when I have no more materials. In good truth, I may allow myself a brief epistle now and then. I have been counting how many letters I have written to you since I landed in England in 1741: they amount—astonishing!—to above eight hundred; and we have not met in three-and-forty years! A correspondence of near half-a-century is, I suppose, not to be paralleled in the annals of the Post-office!

therefore, the cardinal would not trust to his brother, being persuaded that, if he could find a purchaser, he would sell them, or even part with them for a large *rente viagère*, to an Empress of Russia or some other court; but it is not probable that he will ever have the disposal of them, and that, when they fall to the cardinal, he will rather give them to the Madonna di Loretto than to his niece, with whose adoption he is not pleased, nor was consulted about it. Nobody can foresee what the cardinal will do with his crown after his brother's death. The pope cannot permit him to wear it, as he never acknowledged or permitted the elder brother to assume it. You may remember the struggle which I then had with the Marquis D'Aubterre, the French ambassador at Rome, which he never forgave, and some years after expressed himself to the Marquis de Barbantane, who questioned him about it, in these words: 'Ha! Monsieur le Marquis, je croyais faire le plus beau coup possible, mais je ne fis qu'un pas de clerc. Ce diable de M. Mann m'avait prévenu, et gâta mon projet;' which was to take the pope by surprise. But in my letters to old cardinal Albani, which were read in the Consistory held on that subject, I asserted that the French ambassador could not have received orders from his court, whose engagements with that of England had made it inconsistent with its honour to insist upon it; that the ambassador had laid a snare for the pope, which he might avoid by only waiting for an answer from Paris, which I was very sure would bring a disavowal of the ambassador's conduct. That encouraged the pope to tell him that, if his master would be the first, he would be the second, to acknowledge him under the titles he contended for. The answer from France was such as I foretold; and General Conway, who was then Secretary of State, conveyed to me the king's approbation of what I had done. From all this I conclude that no future pope will permit the Cardinal York to instal himself King of England." *From an unpublished Letter of Sir Horace Mann.*—WRIGHT.

2321. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 26, 1784.

I MUST reply a few words, Madam. I was so far from thinking that you had any *double* meaning in your congratulation on the *Fitzroyal* match, that I had not, when I received your Ladyship's letter on that subject, ever heard that there could be a *double* meaning in that expression. It is a delicate subject no doubt, as, indeed, the subject always is, where the fate of a young woman is at stake. However, on my own part I can speak with the utmost truth and simplicity, for I have nothing to disguise or conceal. I remember you thought me mysterious on a *royaller* match; and yet it proved that I had been totally out of the secret till it was publicly divulged.

It is most strictly fact, that I live so totally out of the world, and know so little of what is passing in it, that going to town to see Lady Chewton on her lying-in, as I was leaving her I said, "Is it true that Mr. Fitzroy likes Laura?" "Likes her!" replied she, "why, have you heard nothing?" "Yes," said I, "I was told at Twickenham that they were much together." "Bless me," said she, "don't you know that they ran away yesterday!"

I was still more in the dark about volume the second: I had not even so much as heard that the parties had ever been supposed to like—nay, the proposal had been made to the Duke before even common fame, that knows everything, had told me what she had told to everybody else; and when every body else told it, till it reached even me, I did not ask a question about it of those who must know something of the matter, and it was quite accidentally that it has been mentioned to me at all: nor can I at all judge whether there is any likelihood of its taking place. I have not varied in a tittle from the most minute veracity; though as your Ladyship cannot conceive the extreme ignorance in which I live, you may perhaps think my account inexplicable, or imagine that there is some coldness between me and my family; though there is not the smallest. I believe my nieces love me as much as they can love an old obsolete uncle, for I am always in good humour with them and never preach; but I do not wonder that they do not run to me with their histories, who never interfere in them, nor give my advice unless they ask it

The new Duchess of Albany, the only child the dying Pretender ever had, was by a Mrs. Walkinshaw, sister of the woman of the bed-chamber to the late Princess of Wales. The mother and daughter lived in a convent, at Paris, on a moderate pension, from the Cardinal of York. They formerly went to Rome, but were sent back. The mother died a year or two ago; the daughter is about nine-and-twenty. The house of Fitzjames, fearing their becoming a burden to themselves, prevented the acknowledgment of the daughter.

I have sent for the 'Memoirs of Cromwell's Family;'[1] but as yet have only seen extracts from it in a magazine. It can contain nothing a thousandth part so curious as what we know already; the inter-marriage in the fourth descent of Oliver's posterity and King Charles's; the speech of Richard Cromwell to Lord Bathurst, in the House of Lords; and Fanny Russell's reply to the late Prince of Wales, on the 30th of January.[2] They are anecdotes, especially the two first, worthy of being inserted in the history of mankind, which, if well chosen and well written, would precede common histories, which are but repetitions of no uncommon events.

I did read the 'Lettres de Cachet;' but like the 'Tableau de Paris,' they shocked me far more than they amused me. I hate to read or hear of miseries that one knows it is out of one's power to remedy. The earthquakes in Naples and Sicily last year were of that kind. When I glance in a newspaper on an article of a report on convicts, I hide the paragraph with my finger, that I may not know the day of execution, and feel for what wretches, whom I cannot help, are feeling. The knowledge of woes that one can alleviate, ought never to be avoided—when they are too big for my weak grasp, I fly to the gayer side of the picture—and there one can always find food for smiles. I have often said that this world is a comedy to those who think, and a tragedy to those who feel!—but I have wandered beyond the bounds of a reply, and will wish a calm to Kingsgate, and fair weather everywhere. Were Homer alive, who made gods and goddesses, commissaries and contractors to kings, I suppose he would tell us that Ceres having favoured the English with exuberant plenty, Juno, who was on the French side, sent deluges to drown all harvest. Good night, Madam.

[1] By Mark Noble.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] The intermarriage and the speech of Richard Cromwell may be seen in Walpole's Works, vol. iv. p. 364. Lord Bathurst was made a peer, 31st Dec. 1711, and Richard died, 12th July, 1712.—CUNNINGHAM.

2322. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 7, 1784.

The summer is come at last, my Lord, dressed as fine as a birth-day, though not with so many flowers on its head. In truth, the sun is an old fool, who apes the modern people of fashion by arriving too late: the day is going to bed before he makes his appearance; and one has scarce time to admire his embroidery of green and gold. It was cruel to behold such expanse of corn everywhere, and yet see it all turned to a water-souchy. If I could admire Dante,—which, asking Mr. Hayley's pardon, I do not,—I would have written an olio of Jews and Pagans, and sent Ceres to reproach Master Noah with breaking his promise of the world never being drowned again. But this last week has restored matters to their old channel; and I trust we shall have bread to eat next winter, or I think we must have lived on apples, of which to be sure there is enough to prevent a famine. This is all I know, my Lord; and I hope no news to your Lordship. I have exhausted the themes of air-balloons and highwaymen; and if you *will* have my letters, you must be content with my common-place chat on the seasons. I do nothing worth repeating, nor hear that others do: and though I am content to rust myself, I should be glad to tell your Lordship anything that would amuse you. I dined two days ago at Mrs. Garrick's with Sir William Hamilton, who is returning to the kingdom of cinders. Mrs. Walsingham was there with her son [1] and daughter. He is a very pleasing young man; a fine figure; his face like hers, with something of his grandfather Sir Charles Williams, without his vanity: very sensible, and uncommonly well-bred. The daughter is an imitatress of Mrs. Damer, and has modelled a bust of her brother. Mrs. Damer herself is modelling two masks for the key-stones of the new bridge at Henley. Sir William, who has seen them, says they are in her true antique style. I am in possession of her sleeping dogs in terra-cotta. She asked me if I would consent to her executing them in marble for the Duke of Richmond? I said, gladly; I should like they should exist in a more durable material; but I would not part with the original, which is sharper and more

[1] "I have heard George the Fourth speak most highly of this young Boyle Walsingham." *Croker, MS.*—Cunningham.

alive. Mr. Wyat the architect saw them here lately; and said, he was sure that if the idea was given to the best statuary in Europe, he would not produce so perfect a group. Indeed, with these dogs and the riches I possess by Lady Di,[1] poor Strawberry may vie with much prouder collections.

Adieu, my good Lord! when I fold up a letter I am ashamed of it; but it is your own fault. The last thing I should think of would be troubling your Lordship with such insipid stuff, if you did not command it. Lady Strafford will bear me testimony how often I have protested against it.

2323. TO JOHN PINKERTON, ESQ.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1784.

I HAVE read your piece, Sir, very attentively; and, as I promised, will give you my opinion of it fairly. There is much wit in it, especially in the part of Nebuchadnezer; and the dialogue is very easy, and the *dénouement* in favour of Barbara interesting. There are, however, I think, some objections to be made, which, having written so well, you may easily remove, as they are rather faults in the mechanism than in the writing. Several scenes seem to me to finish too abruptly, and not to be enough connected. Juliana is not enough distinguished, as of an age capable of more elevated sentiments: her desire of playing at hot-cockles and blindman's buff sounds more childish than vulgar. There is another defect, which is in the conduct of the plot: surely there is much too long an interval between the discovery of the marriage of Juliana and Philip, and the anger of her parents. The audience must expect immediate effect from it; and yet the noise it is to make arrives so late, that it would have been forgotten in the course of the intermediate scenes

I doubt a little, whether it would not be dangerous to open the piece with a song that must be totally incomprehensible to at least almost all the audience. It is safer to engage their prejudices by something captivating. I have the same objection to Juliana's mistaking *deposit* for *posset*, which may give an ill turn: besides, those mistakes have been too often produced on the stage: so has

[1] The number of original drawings by Lady Diana Beauclerk, at Strawberry Hill. —WALPOLE.

the character of Mrs. Winter, a romantic old maid; nor does she contribute to the plot or catastrophe. I am afraid that even Mrs. Vernon's aversion to the country is far from novel; and Mr. Colman, more accustomed to the stage than I am, would certainly think so. Nebuchadnezer's repartees of "Very well, thank you!" and bringing in Philip, when bidden to *go for a rascal*, are printed in the *Terræ Filius*, and, I believe, in other jest books; and therefore had better be omitted.

I flatter myself, Sir, you will excuse these remarks; as they are intended kindly, both for your reputation and interest, and to prevent their being made by the manager, or audience, or your friends the reviewers. I am ready to propose your piece to Mr. Colman at any time; but, as I have sincerely an opinion of your parts and talents, it is the part of a friend to wish you to be very correct, especially in a first piece; for, such is the ill-nature of mankind, and their want of judgment too, that, if a new author does not succeed in a first attempt on the stage, a prejudice is contracted against him, and may be fatal to others of his productions, which might have prospered, had that bias not been taken. An established writer for the stage may venture almost any idleness; but a first essay is very different.

Shall I send you your piece, Sir; and how? As Mr. Colman's theatre[1] will not open till next summer, you will have full time to make any alterations you please. I mean, if you should think any of my observations well founded, and which perhaps are very trifling. I have little opinion of my own sagacity as a critic, nor love to make objections; nor should have taken so much liberty with you, if you had not pressed it. I am sure in me it is a mark of regard, and which I never pay to an indifferent author: my admiration of your essay on medals was natural, uninvited, and certainly unaffected. My acquaintance with you since, Sir, has confirmed my opinion of your good sense, and interested me in behalf of your works; and, having lived so long in the world myself, if my experience can be of any service to you, I cannot withhold it when you ask it; at the same time leaving you perfectly at liberty to reject it, if not adopted by your own judgment. The experience of old age is very likely to be balanced by the weaknesses incident to that age. I have not, however, its positiveness yet; and willingly abandon my criticism to the vigour of your judgment.

[1] The Haymarket.—CUNNINGHAM.

2324. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 30, 1784.

I DO not recollect having ever been so totally at a stand for want of matter since our correspondence began. The Duchess of Gloucester, in her last to me, told me that my letters contain nothing but excuses for having nothing to say; so, you see, my silence is not particular to you. I can only appeal to my usual vouchers, the newspapers, who let no event escape them; and I defy you to produce one they have told you that was worth knowing. I cannot fill my paper, as they do, with air-balloons; which, though ranked with the invention of navigation, appear to me as childish as the flying kites of schoolboys. I have not stirred a step to see one; consequently, have not paid a guinea for gazing at one, which I might have seen by only looking up into the air. An Italian, one Lunardi, is the first *airgonaut* that has mounted into the clouds in this country.[1] So far from respecting him as a Jason, I was very angry with him: he had full right to venture his own neck, but none to risk the poor cat, who, not having proved a martyr, is at least better entitled to be a confessor than her master Dædalus. I was even disappointed *after* his expedition had been prosperous: you must know, I have no ideas of space: when I heard how wonderfully he had soared, I concluded he had arrived within a stone's throw of the moon—alas! he had not ascended above a mile and a-half: so pitiful an ascension degraded him totally in my conceit. As there are mountains twice as high, what signifies flying, if you do not rise above the top of the earth? any one on foot may walk higher than this man-eagle! Well! now you know all that I know—and was it worth telling?

There does seem to be a storm still brewing in Ireland, though a favourable turn has happened. The people of property have found out there is no joke in putting votes into the hands of the Catholics.[2] They were Irish heads that did not make that discovery a little sooner. Can there be a greater absurdity than Papists voting for

[1] This aërial voyage was performed in London, September 15th, 1784, by Vincent Lunardi, who ascended from the Artillery-ground, taking with him a dog, a cat, and a pigeon; he descended in a meadow near Ware, in Hertfordshire.—WRIGHT.

[2] The admission of Romanists to the elective franchise in Ireland gave great dissatisfaction to the Protestants of the middle and lower class, who had previously the preference as tenants, on account of their exclusive right of voting.—WRIGHT.

Members of Parliament? It will be well for those who invited them to that participation, if they can satisfy them without granting it! How often I reflect on my father's *Quieta non movere!* It seems to me, from all I have seen of late years, to be the soundest maxim in politics ever pronounced. Think of a reformation of Parliament by admitting Roman Catholics to vote at elections! and that that preposterous idea should have been adopted by Presbyterians! That it was sanctified by a Protestant Bishop[1] is not strange; *he* would call Mussulmen to poll, were there any within the diocese of Derry.

Your Lord Paramount seems to be taking large strides towards Holland;[2] but of that you probably know more than I do,—at least, you cannot know less. The old gentlewomen in my neighbourhood, the only company I have, study no map but that of *Tendre* in Clelia; but they relate the adventures of that country in a different style from Mademoiselle Scudery; they put as many couple together, but not quite with such honourable intentions as she did. In short, you may perceive that I can send you no intelligence but folly and lies from newspapers, or scandal from beldams; I do not listen to the latter, nor mind the former. I pay you my monthly quit-rent, though in truth it is not worth a pepper-corn.

Sir William Hamilton, just before he set out, gave me a small printed account of the *Reale Galleria di Firenze accresciuta*, &c. By it I perceive, that, though the Great-Duke has dispersed the group of the Niobe like our Riot Act, and left them staring in strange attitudes like the mob on such an occasion, he has assembled all the outlying parts of the Medicean collection,[3] and made great purchases himself and new-arranged the whole. This is praiseworthy, but seems a little contradicted by selling so much of the *Guarda-roba;* not that *I* blame him I am sure, who, thanks to you, have profited by it. The little book promises an ampler account. Should such appear, I should be glad to have it, on strict condition of paying for it; otherwise, you know you exclude me from troubling you with any commission: my house is full of your spoils already, and by your munificence is a *Galleria Reale* itself.

I shall now be expecting your nephew soon, and, I trust, with a perfectly good account of you. The next time he visits you, I may

[1] Dr. Frederick Hervey, Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry.—Walpole.

[2] The Emperor Joseph II. quarrelled with the Dutch for the navigation of the Scheldt.—Walpole.

[3] Particularly from the Villa Medici at Rome.—Walpole.

be able to send you a description of my *Galleria*,—I have long been preparing it, and it is almost finished,—with some prints, which, however, I doubt, will convey no very adequate idea of it. In the first place, they are but moderately executed: I could not afford to pay our principal engravers, whose prices are equal to, nay, far above, those of former capital painters. In the next, as there is a solemnity in the house, of which the cuts will give you an idea, they cannot add the gay variety of the scene without, which is very different from every side, and almost from every chamber, and makes a most agreeable contrast; the house being placed almost in an elbow of the Thames, which surrounds half, and consequently beautifies three of the aspects. Then my little hill, and diminutive enough it is, gazes up to Royal Richmond; and Twickenham on the left, and Kingston Wick on the right, are seen across bends of the river, which on each hand appears like a Lilliputian seaport. Swans, cows, sheep, coaches, post-chaises, carts, horsemen, and foot-passengers are continually in view. The fourth scene is a large common-field, a constant prospect of harvest and its stages, traversed under my windows by the great road to Hampton Court; in short, an animated view of the country. These moving pictures compensate the conventual gloom of the inside; which, however, when the sun shines, is gorgeous, as he appears all crimson and gold and azure through the painted glass. Now, to be quite fair, you must turn the perspective, and look at this vision through the diminishing end of the telescope; for nothing is so small as the whole, and even Mount Richmond would not reach up to Fiesole's shoe-buckle. If your nephew is still with you, he will confirm the truth of all the pomp, and all the humility, of my description. I grieve that you would never come and cast an eye on it!—But are even our visions pure from alloy? Does not some drawback always hang over them? and, being visions, how rapidly must not they fleet away! Yes, yes; our smiles and our tears are almost as transient as the lustre of the morning and the shadows of the evening, and almost as frequently interchanged. Our passions form airy balloons—we know not how to *direct* them; and the very inflammable matter that transports them, often makes the bubble burst. Adieu!

2325. TO JOHN PINKERTON, ESQ.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 6, **1784.**

You have accepted my remarks with great good-humour, Sir: I wish you may not have paid too much regard to them; and I should be glad that you did not rest any alterations on my single judgment, to which I have but little respect myself. I have not thought often on theatric performances, and of late not at all. A chief ground of my observations on your piece proceeded from having taken notice that an English audience is apt to be struck with some familiar sound, though there is nothing ridiculous in the passage; and fall into a foolish laugh, that often proves fatal to the author. Such was my objection to *hot-cockles*. You have, indeed, convinced me that I did not enough attend to your piece, as a *farce;* and, you must excuse me, my regard for you and your wit made me consider it rather as a short comedy. Very probably too, I have retained the pedantic impressions of the French, and demanded more observance of their rules than is necessary or just: yet I myself have often condemned their too delicate rigour. Nay, I have wished that farce and speaking harlequins were more encouraged, in order to leave open a wider field of invention to writers for the stage. Of late I have amply had my wish: Mr. O'Keeffe has brought our audiences to bear with every extravagance; and, were there not such irresistible humour in his utmost daring, it would be impossible to deny that he has passed even beyond the limits of nonsense. But I confine this approbation to his 'Agreeable Surprise.' In his other pieces there is much more untempered nonsense than humour. Even that favourite performance I wondered that Mr. Colman dared to produce.

Your remark, that a piece full of marked characters would be void of nature, is most just. This is so strongly my opinion, that I thought it a great fault in Miss Burney's 'Cecilia,' though it has a thousand other beauties, that she has laboured far too much to make all her personages talk always in character; whereas, in the present refined or depraved state of human nature, most people endeavour to conceal their real character, not to display it. A professional man, as a pedantic fellow of a college or a seaman, has a characteristic dialect; but that is very different from continually *letting out* his ruling passion.

This brings me, Sir, to the alteration you offer in the personage of Mrs. Winter, whom you wittily propose to turn into a mermaid. I approve the idea much: I like too the restoration of Mrs. Vernon to a plain reasonable woman. She will be a contrast to the bad characters, and but a gradation to produce Barbara, without making her too glaringly bright without any intermediate shade. In truth, as you certainly may write excellently if you please, I wish you to bestow your utmost abilities on whatever you give to the public. I am wrong when I would have a farce as chaste and sober as a comedy; but I would have a farce made as good as it can be. I do not know *how* that is to be accomplished; but I believe you do. You are so obliging as to offer to accept a song of mine, if I have one by me. Dear Sir, I have no more talent for writing a song than for writing an ode like Dryden's or Gray's. It is a talent *per se;* and given, like every other branch of genius, by nature alone. Poor Shenstone was labouring through his whole life to write a perfect song, and, in my opinion at least, never once succeeded; not better than Pope did in a St. Cecilian Ode. I doubt whether we have not gone a long, long way beyond the possibility of writing a good song. All the words in the language have been so often employed on simple images (without which a song cannot be good), and such reams of bad verses have been produced in that kind, that I question whether true simplicity itself could please now. At least we are not likely to have any such thing. Our present choir of poetic virgins write in the other extreme. They colour their compositions so highly with choice and dainty phrases, that their own dresses are not more fantastic and romantic. Their nightingales make as many divisions as Italian singers. But this is wandering from the subject; and, while I only meant to tell you what I could not do myself, I am telling you what others do ill. I will yet hazard one other opinion, though relative to composition in general. There are two periods favourable to poets: a rude age, when a genius may hazard anything, and when nothing has been forestalled: the other is, when, after ages of barbarism and incorrection, a master or two produces models formed by purity and taste; Virgil, Horace, Boileau, Corneille, Racine, Pope, exploded the licentiousness that reigned before them. What happened? Nobody dared to write in contradiction to the severity established; and very few had abilities to rival their masters. Insipidity ensues, novelty is dangerous, and bombast usurps the throne which had been debased by a race of

fainéants. This rhapsody will probably convince you, Sir, how much you was mistaken in setting any value on my judgment.

February will certainly be time enough for your piece to be finished. I again beg you, Sir, to pay no deference to my criticisms, against your own cool reflections. It is prudent to consult others before one ventures on publication; but every single person is as liable to be erroneous as an author. An elderly man, as he gains experience, acquires prejudices too: nay, old age has generally two faults; it is too quick-sighted into the faults of the time being, and too blind to the faults that reigned in his own youth, which, having partaken of or having admired, though injudiciously, he recollects with complacence.

I confess, too, that there must be two distinct views in writers for the stage, one of which is more allowable to them than to other authors. The one is durable fame; the other, peculiar to dramatic authors, the view of writing to the present taste (and, perhaps as you say, to the level of the audience). I do not mean for the sake of profit; but even high comedy must risk a little of its immortality by consulting the ruling taste; and thence comedy always loses some of its beauties, the transient, and some of its intelligibility. Like its harsher sister, satire, many of its allusions must vanish, as the objects it aims at correcting cease to be in vogue; and, perhaps, that cessation, the natural death of fashion, is often ascribed by an author to his own reproofs. Ladies would have left off patching on the Whig or Tory side of their face, though Mr. Addison had not written his excellent 'Spectator' [No. 81]. Probably even they who might be corrected by his reprimand, adopted some new distinction as ridiculous; not discovering that his satire was levelled at their partial animosity, and not at the mode of placing their patches; for, unfortunately, as the world cannot be cured of being foolish, a preacher who eradicates one folly, does but make room for some other.

2328. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct 15. 1784.

As I have heard nothing from you, I flatter myself Lady Aylesbury mends, or I think you would have brought her again to the physicians: you will, I conclude, next week, as towards the end of it the ten days they named will be expired. I must be in town myself about Thursday on some little business of my own.

As I was writing this, my servants called me away to see a balloon; I suppose Blanchard's, that was to be let off from Chelsea this morning. I saw it from the common field before the window of my round tower. It appeared about a third of the size of the moon, or less, when setting, something above the tops of the trees on the level horizon. It was then descending; and, after rising and declining a little, it sunk slowly behind the trees, I should think about or beyond Sunbury, at five minutes after one. But you know I am a very inexact guesser at measures and distances, and may be mistaken in many miles; and you know how little I have attended to those *airgonauts:* only t'other night I diverted myself with a sort of meditation on future *airgonation*, supposing that it will not only be perfected, but will depose navigation. I did not finish it, because I am not skilled, like the gentleman that used to write political ship-news, in that style which I wanted to perfect my essay: but in the prelude I observed how ignorant the ancients were in supposing Icarus melted the wax of his wings by too near access to the sun, whereas he would have been frozen to death before he made the first post on that road. Next, I discovered an alliance between Bishop Wilkins's art of flying and his plan of universal language; the latter of which he no doubt calculated to prevent the want of an interpreter when he should arrive at the moon.

But I chiefly amused myself with ideas of the change that would be made in the world by the substitution of balloons to ships. I supposed our seaports to become *deserted villages;* and Salisbury Plain, Newmarket Heath, (another canvass for alteration of ideas,) and all downs (but *the* Downs) arising into dock-yards for aërial vessels. Such a field would be ample in furnishing new speculations. But to come to my ship-news:—

"The good balloon Dædalus, Captain Wing-ate, will fly in a few

days for China; he will stop at the top of the Monument to take in passengers.

"Arrived on Brand-sands, the Vulture, Captain Nabob; the Tortoise snow, from Lapland; the Pet-en-l'air, from Versailles; the Dreadnought, from Mount Etna, Sir W. Hamilton, commander; the Tympany, Montgolfier; and the Mine-A-in-a-bandbox, from the Cape of Good Hope. Foundered in a hurricane, the Bird of Paradise, from Mount Ararat. The Bubble, Sheldon, took fire, and was burnt to her gallery; and the Phœnix is to be cut down to a second-rate."

In those days Old Sarum will again be a town and have houses in it. There will be fights in the air with wind-guns and bows and arrows; and there will be prodigious increase of land for tillage, especially in France, by breaking up all public roads as useless. But enough of my fooleries; for which I am sorry you must pay double postage.

2327. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 23, 1784.

It is very true, Madam, we are robbed in the face of the sun, as well as at the going down thereof. I know not how other districts fare, but for five miles round us we are in perpetual jeopardy. Two of our justices, returning from a cabinet council of their own, at Brentford, were robbed last week, before three o'clock, at the gates of Twickenham: no wonder; I believe they are all hoodwinked like their *Alma Mater* herself, and, consequently, as they cannot see, it is not surprising that both she and they should often weigh out their goods with uneven scales.

Being perfectly secure of not having given your Ladyship any cause of offence, I did conclude that one reason of your silence must be the topic to which you allude, and on which you could not like to write after you knew that I had absolutely nothing to do in the affair. I was certainly as little desirous of renewing a theme which terminated as I had foreseen, and as, in the only conversation I had with the person concerned, I foretold it would; the last words I said to her being to warn her to be prepared for such an event. You may then well believe, Madam, that it cannot be my wish to revive a subject so little agreeable.

I am acquainted with Mrs. Allanson, and have very great esteem for her, and could tell your Ladyship her history, were it not

too long for a letter. Her conduct has been noble and reasonable; her patroness's, in my opinion, preposterous at least. The female disciples of that school, which is not that of Pythagoras, the mistress resembling him in nothing but in a thigh of solid gold, are loud in her defence. I hope Mr. Pulteney will protect Mrs. Allanson by the same substantial arguments.

I cannot unlock Mr. Powis's charade. It may be a very good something, but does not seem to be a charade, which used to be formed of a first part, a second, and a whole. Now I did not know that *character* was the whole of anybody or anything.

Balloons is a subject I do not intend to tap. If they can be improved into anything more than Brobdignag kites, it must be in a century or two after I shall be laid low. A century, in my acceptation means a hundred years hence, or a year or two hence, for after one ceases to be, all duration is of the same length; and everything that one guesses will happen after one's-self is no more, is equally a vision. Visions I loved while they decked with rainbows, or concealed the clouds of the horizon before me; but now that the dream is so near to an end, I have no occasion for lesser pageants—much less for divining with what airy vehicles the atmosphere will be peopled hereafter, or how much more expeditiously the east, west, or south will be ravaged and butchered, than they have been by the old-fashioned clumsy method of navigation.

It is true, I do not shut my eyes to the follies actually before them. I smile at the adoration paid to these aerial Quixotes; and, reflect that, as formerly, men were admired for their courage in risking their lives in order to destroy others; now they are worshipped for venturing their necks *en pure perte*—much more commendably I do allow; yet fame is the equal object of both. I smile, too, at the stupidity that pays a guinea for being allowed to see what any man may see by holding up his head and looking at the sky: and I observe that no improvements of science or knowledge make the world a jot wiser; knowledge, like reason, being a fine tool that will give an exquisite polish or finishing to ornaments; but is not strong enough to answer the common occasions of mankind.

2328. TO JOHN PINKERTON, ESQ.

Oct. 27, 1784.

I would not answer your letter, Sir, till I could tell you that I had put your play into Mr. Colman's hands, which I have done. He desired my consent to his carrying it into the country to read it deliberately: you shall know as soon as I receive his determination. I am much obliged to you for the many civil and kind expressions in your letter, and for the friendly information you give me. Partiality, I fear, dictated the former; but the last I can only ascribe to the goodness of your heart. I have published nothing of any size but the pieces you mention, and one or two small tracts now out of print and forgotten. The rest have been prefaces to my Strawberry editions, and to a few other publications; and some fugitive pieces which I reprinted several years ago in a small volume, and which shall be at your service, with the 'Catalogue of Noble Authors.'

With regard to the bookseller who has taken the pains to collect my writings for an edition (amongst which I do not doubt but he will generously bestow on me many that I did not *write*, according to the liberal practice of such compilers), and who also intends to write my life, to which (as I never did anything worthy of the notice of the public) he must likewise be a volunteer contributor, it would be vain for me to endeavour to prevent such a design. Whoever has been so unadvised as to throw himself on the public, must pay such a tax in a pamphlet or magazine when he dies; but, happily, the insects that prey on carrion are still more short-lived than the carcases were, from which they draw their nutriment. Those momentary abortions live but a day, and are thrust aside by like embryos. Literary characters, when not illustrious, are known only to a few literary men; and, amidst the world of books, few readers can come to my share. Printing, that secures existence (in libraries) to indifferent authors of any bulk, is like those cases of Egyptian mummies which in catacombs preserve bodies of one knows not whom, and which are scribbled over with characters that nobody attempts to read, till nobody understands the language in which they were written.

I believe therefore it will be most wise to swim for a moment on the passing current, secure that it will soon hurry me into the ocean

where all things are forgotten. To appoint a biographer is to bespeak a panegyric; and I doubt whether they who collect their works for the public, and, like me, are conscious of no intrinsic worth, do but beg mankind to accept of talents (whatever they were) in lieu of virtues. To anticipate spurious publications by a comprehensive and authentic one, is almost as great an evil: it is giving a body to scattered atoms; and such an act in one's old age is declaring a fondness for the indiscretions of youth, or for the trifles of an age which, though more mature, is only the less excusable. It is most true, Sir, that, so far from being prejudiced in favour of my own writings, I am persuaded that, had I thought early as I think now, I should never have appeared as an author. Age, frequent illness and pain, have given me as many hours of reflection in the intervals of the two latter, as the two latter have disabled from reflection; and, besides their showing me the inutility of all our little views, they have suggested an observation that I love to encourage in myself from the rationality of it. I have learnt and have practised the humiliating task of comparing myself with great authors; and that comparison has annihilated all the flattery that self-love could suggest. I know how trifling my own writings are, and how far below the standard that constitutes excellence: as for the shades that distinguish the degrees of mediocrity, they are not worth discrimination; and he must be very modest, or easily satisfied, who can be content to glimmer for an instant a little more than his brethren glow-worms. Mine, therefore, you find, Sir, is not humility, but pride. When young, I wished for fame; not examining whether I was capable of attaining it, nor considering in what lights fame was desirable. There are two sorts of honest fame; *that* attendant on the truly great, and that better sort that is due to the good. I fear I did not aim at the latter; nor discovered, till too late, that I could not compass the former. Having neglected the best road, and having, instead of the other, strolled into a narrow path that led to no good worth seeking, I see the idleness of my journey, and hold it more graceful to abandon my wanderings to chance or oblivion, than to mark solicitude for trifles, which I think so myself.

I beg your pardon for talking so much of myself; but an answer was due to the unmerited attention which you have paid to my writings. I turn with more pleasure to speak on yours. Forgive me if I shall blame you, whether you either abandon your intention,

or are too impatient to execute it.[1] Your Preface proves that you are capable of treating the subject ably; but allow me to repeat, that it is a work that ought not to be performed impetuously. A mere recapitulation of authenticated facts would be dry; a more enlarged plan would demand much acquaintance with the characters of the actors, and with the probable sources of measures. The present time is accustomed to details and anecdotes; and the age immediately preceding one's own is less known to any man than the history of any other period. You are young enough, Sir, to collect information on many particulars that will occur in your progress, from living actors, at least from their contemporaries; and, great as your ardour may be, you will find yourself delayed by the want of materials, and by farther necessary inquiries. As you have variety of talents, why should not you exercise them on works that will admit of more rapidity; and at the same time, in leisure moments, commence, digest, and enrich your plan by collecting new matter for it?

In one word, I have too much zeal for your credit, not to dissuade you from precipitation in a work of the kind you meditate. That I speak sincerely you are sure; as accident, not design, made you acquainted with my admiration of your tract on medals. If I wish to delay your history, it must be from wishing that it may appear with more advantages; and I must speak disinterestedly, as my age will not allow me to hope to see it, if not finished soon. I should not forgive myself if I turned you from prosecution of your work; but, as I am certain that my writings can have given you no opinion of my having sound and deep judgment, pray follow your own, and allow no merit but that of sincerity and zeal to the sentiments of yours, &c.

2329. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 1, 1784.

You are one of the last men in the world to be comforted by a legacy for the loss of a friend; nor can one see it in any agreeable light, but as a testimony of real affection. An old friend is a double loss when one's self is not young. However, it is the frequent untying of such strings that accustoms one to one's own departure. The patriarchs might preserve a relish for life, even when five

[1] Of writing a history of the reign of George the Second.—Wright.

hundred years old; because their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren were all upon as lasting an establishment; and, I suppose, the affections of the ancestry were as vivacious as themselves. But, in the post-diluvian system, long-lived parents are often more unfortunate than we old bachelors, and survive their children. For my part, who have outlived some friends and most of my contemporaries, I am attached to being but by few threads. I see little difference between living in Otaheite, and with new generations. Small advantage has one in the latter intercourse, but in not having an unknown language to learn; nay, one has part of a new tongue to practise when there is a distance of fifty years between the two vocabularies. My dear old friend, Madame du Deffand, often said, she did not understand modern French. Swift was out of humour with many words coined in his own time;—a common foible with elderly men, who seem to think that everything was in perfection when they entered the world, and could not be altered but for the worse.

Thank you for the account of the arrival of the Duchess of Albany. It is one of the last chapters of the House of Stuart; whose history—tarry but a little—may be written, like that of the Medici. The episode of the Princess of Stolberg[1] is more proper for an Atalantis.[2] Such anecdotes, however, come within my

[1] The Pretender's wife, daughter of the Prince of Stolberg, and great-granddaughter of the outlawed Earl of Ailesbury, who died at Brussels. The Countess of Albany was separated from her husband on account of his ill-usage, and was supposed to like Count Alfieri (the poet), a Piedmontese gentleman, who had been in England, where he fought a duel with the second Lord Ligonier, on having an intrigue with his wife, who was daughter of Lord Rivers, and who was soon after divorced.—Walpole.

[2] In a letter to Walpole, dated Florence, October 8th, Sir Horace Mann had told him that "The arrival of Lady Charlotte Stuart, Duchess of Albany, has occasioned some little bustle in the town. A French lady, who for thirty years had been totally neglected, but on a sudden transformed into a duchess, was an object that excited the curiosity of both sexes—the men, to see her figure; the ladies, scrupulously to examine that, and the new modes she has brought from Paris: the result of all which is, that she is allowed to be a good figure, tall and well-made, but that the features of her face resemble too much those of her father to be handsome. She is gay, lively, and very affable, and has the behaviour of a well-bred Frenchwoman, without assuming the least distinction among our ladies on account of her new dignity. They flock to her door to leave their cards, which she is to return: though the countess, her stepmother, did not, and therefore, or perhaps for another reason, lived alone with Count Alfieri, who, as a writer of tragedies, formed the plot of her elopement, on which the acknowledgment of this natural daughter, all the honours she has received, and the future advantage she will have by being heiress to all her father can leave her, depend. Perhaps neither the countess nor her lover foresaw all this, and it is very probable that she will repent of it, and consequently detest her adviser. The countess renounced everything to obtain her liberty, gave up her pin-money, which was 3000 crowns

compass, who live too much out of the world to know what bigger monarchs are doing. Newspapers tell me your Lord Paramount is going to annihilate that fictitious state, Holland. I shall not be surprised if he, France, and Prussia divide it, like Poland, in order to settle the Republic! perhaps may create a kingdom for the Prince of Orange out of the Hague and five miles round.

Your nephew, though arrived, I have not yet seen; he is in Kent with his daughters. The new Signora Mozzi I should think not enchanted with her husband's *passing eldest* on the wedding-night. She will take care not to choose a philosopher for her second.

This scrap, which in reality is but a reply to some paragraphs in yours, gives itself the denomination of a letter, to keep up the decorum of regularity, which idle veterans have no excuse for neglecting, and often practise mechanically. I began it last night "because I had nothing else to do, and quitted it because I had nothing more to say;" which was the whole of a letter from a French lady to her husband, and in which there was humour, as she was more indifferent to him than I am to you. Now I do resume it, I find it not so convenient; for my hand shakes, being very nervous in a morning. It might shake for another reason, which I should not disguise if the true one; for nothing is so foolish as concealing one's age, since one cannot deceive the only person who can care whether one is a year or two older or younger—one's self. That secrecy convinces me, amongst other reasons, that nothing is falser than the common maxim, that no one knows himself. Whom the deuce should one know, if not the person one sees the oftenest and observes the most, and who has not a thought but one knows? Elderly women, who repair their faces, prove they

a-year, and could not obtain anything for a separate maintenance; so that she does not receive a shilling from the Stuart family, and is only to enjoy a jointure of 6000 crowns after her husband's death—a poor equivalent for what she has lost. However, she obtained a pension from the court of France soon after her separation, where her complaints were listened to with compassion, and 20,000 *petits écus*, which she now lives upon. The new Duchess has appeared at the theatres, which were crowded on her account, with all her father's jewels, which are very fine. He asked leave of the Duke to put a *baldachino*, or dais, over her boxes in each theatre, and a velvet carpet to hang before it, which was refused; but had permission to line the boxes as he pleased. That in the great theatre is hung with crimson damask: the cushion is velvet, with gold lace. In the other theatre it is yellow damask. The count is much pleased with this distinction. The duchess brought with her, as a *dame de compagnie*, a Frenchwoman, who married an Irish officer named O'Donnel; and an *écuyer* named Nairn, a Scotchman, whom they call my lord. We have heard that the king of France has legitimated her so far as to inherit what her father possesses in France." *From an unpublished Letter.*—WRIGHT.

discover the decay; and yet flatter themselves that others will not discover the alteration which even repairs make. I should think that a daily looking-glass and conscience would leave neither women nor men ignorant of themselves. We are silly animals! even our wisdom but consists in remarks on the follies of others, if not on our own; and, as we are of the same species, we are sure of not being exempt: for myself, I am clear that I was born, and shall die, with no exclusive patent!

2330. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 8, 1784.

As I wrote to you but a week ago, don't imagine from another so soon that I have anything fresh to tell you. On the contrary, I only write to answer a letter of very antique date from you, which I received from your nephew yesterday, with the parcel of mine. I questioned him strictly, as usual; and his account of you is very good. He says, you are sometimes languid in a morning; but was not you so in the century when we were together? If he described *me* as justly to you, you must think me the Old Man of the Mountain. But what signify languors or wrinkles, if one does not suffer pain, nor has a mind that wishes to be younger than its body? that is, if one is neither miserable nor ridiculous, it is no matter what the register says. Your nephew seems much benefited by his journey; and I encourage him to renew them frequently, for both your sakes.

You tell me—but it was on the 11th of September when you told me so—that Cavalier Mozzi had not received the general acquittance from Mr. Hoare. If still not received, he should write to Mr. Hoare or Sharpe. I have taken my leave and cannot recommence.

You surprise me with the notice that old Ramsay [the painter] had a hand in trumpery.[1] I do not mean that I wonder at his being a bad poet—I did not know he was one at all, though a very great scribbler; but an old dotard! to be sporting and playing at leap-frog with brats.

I came to town yesterday to bespeak some winter clothes, and hear that the Emperor has marched threescore thousand men

[1] 'The Arno Miscellany.'—WALPOLE.

towards Holland. We shall now feel a fresh consequence of the blessed American war! It begot the late war with Holland; the remaining animosity of which, and our present impotence, will prevent us from defending the Dutch: and thence, when Austria, as well as France, are grown great maritime powers, we shall be a single one, and probably the weakest of the three! But as I never meddle with the book of futurity, and its commentators' guesses, I leave that matter to younger readers.

Ireland, as far as my spare intelligence extends, is a little come to its senses. Landed property, though no genius, has discovered that Popery, if admitted to a community of votes, would be apt to inquire into the old titles of estates; and to remember, that prescription never holds against any Church militant, especially not against the Church of Rome. You know I have ever been averse to toleration of an intolerant religion. I have frequently talked myself hoarse, with many of my best friends, on the impossibility of satisfying *Irish* Catholics without restoring their estates. It was particularly silly to revive the subject in this age, when Popery was so rapidly declining. The world had the felicity to see that fashion passing away—for modes of religion are but graver fashions; nor will anything but contradiction keep fashion up. Its inconvenience is discovered, if let alone; or, as women say of their gowns, *it is cut and turned*, or variety is sought; and some mantua-maker or priest, that wants business, invents a new mode, which takes the faster, the more it inverts its predecessor. I shall not wonder if Cæsar, after ravaging, or dividing, or seizing half Europe, should grow devout, and give it some novel religion of his own manufacture.

I have had as many disputes on the Reformation of Parliament. I do not love removing land-marks. Whether it is the leaven of which my pap was made, or whether my father's *Quieta non movere* is irradicable, experiments are not to my taste; but I find I am talking "about it and about it," because I really have nothing to tell you, and know nothing. I do worse than live out of the world, for I live with the old women of my neighbourhood. I read little, not bestowing my eyes without an object. In short, I am perfectly idle; and such a glutton of my tranquillity, that I had rather do nothing than discompose it. I would *go out* quietly; and, as one is sure of being forgotten the moment one is gone, it is as well to anticipate oblivion.

2331. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 12, 1784.

It happens to me now, Madam, as I suppose it does to most who have intervals in their correspondence: when they come to write, their letters must be a patch-work of discordant affections—if affections they have; so chequered are the events of human life! If I turn to one side of my mind, it is all sunshine and joy, on the Queen's goodness to Lord Waldegrave;[1] if to the other, what true sorrow for the death of Lady Drogheda![2] She was really as perfect as a mortal could be. Her piety, though rigid, was so sweet! her understanding she had cultivated herself; it was as deep as it was improved. She had a concise and comprehensive eloquence, that summed up the newest and most just reflections in the compass of a short sentence; from the mouth of an ancient sage they would have been handed down as maxims. The gentle and harmonious tone of her voice, the captivating graces of her manner, and the blushes that accompanied all she said,—for her resolution of speaking when it was proper, was for ever combating her bashfulness,—made such an assemblage of attraction, that she appeared more beautiful than she was in reality—but it was the beauty of a modest saint. Her firmness was equal to her other qualities: perceiving that in fondness to her son she equalled her mother, she sent him from her to England for his education. She has been carried off in six days by a bilious disorder, leaving a miserable husband, whom, though doting on her, she could not preserve from ruining his health and fortune by drink and play, four or five daughters, to whom her loss is irreparable, a family of brothers and sisters, who idolised her, and a most fond father [Lord Hertford], to whom this blow will recall the death of her mother, exactly at this time two years ago. I never saw General Conway so much struck as when he brought me the news.

This indulgence to my own sensations will not compensate to your Ladyship for the story of Mrs A.; but that indeed I am not entirely

[1] George, fourth Earl of Waldegrave (died 1789). He had newly succeeded his father, and was married to his cousin, a daughter of Walpole's niece, the Duchess of Gloucester, by her first husband.—Cunningham.

[2] Lady Anne Seymour Conway, married in 1766 to Charles, Earl of Drogheda. Lord Hertford (her father), writing to Walpole on the occasion of Lady Drogheda's death, observes in reply, "She was, as you say, perfect."—Cunningham.

at liberty to write, as there are some circumstances which, though highly to her honour, are not proper for the post. In lieu I can tell you a curious anecdote of the King of Sweden. When last at Florence, he found the Count of Albany in a wretched condition, destitute even of an exchequer to pay his household. He imparted his sympathy *at the opera*—to whom, think you, Madam? only to the minister of the Count's rival,—who, with his usual readiness and propriety replied, that he supposed the subsidy his Majesty said he intended to bestow on his poor compeer, was mentioned to *him* as a hint to sound whether it would not be offensive to a brother monarch. He accepted that idea: then proposed to make a free gift of 1000*l.*,—to be followed by a like benevolence in six months, and an annual donative of more than both. You expect next no doubt to hear, Madam, that the good ship 'Guilderstern' arrived at Leghorn loaded with copper-money—*pas encore*. The modern Gustavus desired the English resident to advance the money, for which he would give him a draft on the mines of Dalecarlia. Having received no such instructions, the Minister desired to be excused; and some how or other the treasurer is not yet arrived. On the contrary, as the new Duchess of Albany will inherit jewels and effects to the amount of at least 100,000*l.*, it is said that one of the royal Dukes of Ostrogothia or Vandalmania is to marry her; but this I do not warrant. I had the whole story from the younger Sir Horace, who is just come to England. The elder is too discreet ever to send *me* such anecdotes of the Porphyrogeniti.

You tell me, Madam, the humours of the Prince of Wales and his new comrade, old Slender,[1] nay, but they are not of my calibre. I kissed the hand of George I., and do not look to the revels of his great great-grandson. My life has been protracted long beyond the term that my weak frame seemed to promise; yet, having lived long, is no reason for expecting to live much longer. I amuse the remnant by recollection, not by guessing at futurity; for, though memory is a shadow, it is at least a more substantial one than hope or foresight.

I have seen Mr. Duane, who is feeble, indeed, but his head is clear; and his appetite for buying curiosities still alert; consequently I am much more superannuated, for I find *that* passion has taken its flight too!

[1] Mr. Fox?—Cunningham.

2332. TO MISS HANNAH MORE.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 13, 1784.

THANK you a thousand times, dear Madam, for your obliging letter and the new *Bristol stones* you have sent me, which would pass on a more skilful lapidary than I am for having been brillianted by a professed artist, if you had not told me that they came shining out of a native mine, and had no foreign diamond-dust to polish them. Indeed, can one doubt any longer that Bristol is as rich and warm a soil as India? I am convinced it has been so of late years, though I question its having been so luxuriant in Alderman Canning's days; and I have MORE reasons for thinking so, than from the marvels of Chatterton.—But I will drop metaphors, lest some nabob should take me *au pied de la lettre*, fit out an expedition, plunder your city, and massacre you for weighing *too many* carats.

Seriously, Madam, I am surprised—and chiefly at the kind of genius of this unhappy female.[1] Her ear, as you remark, is perfect; but that, being a gift of nature, amazes me less. Her expressions are more exalted than poetic; and discover taste, as you say, rather than discover flights of fancy and wild ideas, as one should expect. I should therefore advise her quitting blank verse, which wants the highest colouring to distinguish it from prose; whereas her taste, and probably good sense, might give sufficient beauty to her rhymes. Her not being learned is another reason against her writing in blank verse. Milton employed all his reading, nay, all his geographic knowledge, to enrich his language, and succeeded. They who have imitated him in that particular, have been mere monkeys; and they who neglected it, flat and poor.

Were I not persuaded by the samples you have sent me, Madam, that this woman has talents, I should not advise her encouraging her propensity, lest it should divert her from the care of her family, and, after the novelty is over, leave her worse than she was. When the late Queen [Caroline, Queen of George II.] patronised Stephen Duck, who was only a wonder at first, and had not genius enough to support the character he had promised, twenty artisans and labourers turned poets, and starved. Your poetess can scarce be more miserable than she is, and even the reputation of being an authoress

[1] Mrs. Yearsley, the milkwoman of Bristol.—BERRY.

may procure her customers: but as poetry is one of your least excellences, Madam (your virtues will forgive me), I am sure you will not only give her counsels for her works, but for her conduct; and your gentleness will blend them so judiciously, that she will mind the friend as well as the mistress. She must remember that she is a Lactilla, not a Pastora; and is to tend real cows, not Arcadian sheep.

What! if I should go a step farther, dear Madam, and take the liberty of reproving you for putting into this poor woman's hands such a frantic thing as 'The Castle of Otranto'? It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written; an age in which much was known; that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were conformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled; was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be brought back to imagination, than to be led astray by it:—but you will have made a hurly-burly in this poor woman's head, which it cannot develop and digest.

I will not reprove without suggesting something in my turn. Give her Dryden's 'Cock and Fox,' the standard of good sense, poetry, nature, and ease. I would recommend others of his tales: but her imagination is already too gloomy, and should be enlivened; for which reason I do not name Mr. Gray's 'Eton Ode' and 'Churchyard.' Prior's 'Solomon' (for I doubt his 'Alma,' though far superior, is too learned for her limited reading,) would be very proper. In truth, I think the cast of the age (I mean in its compositions) is too *sombre*. The flimsy giantry of Ossian has introduced mountainous horrors. The exhibitions at Somerset-house are crowded with Brobdignag ghosts. Read and explain to her a charming poetic familiarity called the 'Blue-stocking Club.' If she has not your other pieces, might I take the liberty, Madam, of begging you to buy them for her, and let me be in your debt? And that your lessons may win their way more easily, even though her heart be good, will you add a guinea or two, as you see proper? And though I do not love to be named, yet, if it would encourage a subscription, I should have no scruple. It will be best to begin moderately; for, if she should take Hippocrene for Pactolus, we may hasten her ruin, not contribute to her fortune.

On recollection, you had better call me Mr. Anybody, than name my name, which I fear is in bad odour at Bristol, on poor Chatterton's account; and it may be thought that I am atoning his ghost: though, if his friends would show my letters to him, you would find

that I was as tender to him as to your Milkwoman: but *that* they have never done, among other instances of their injustice. However, I beg you to say nothing on that subject, as I have declared I would not.

I have seen our excellent friend[1] in Clarges-street; she complains as usual of her deafness; but I assure you it is at least not worse, nor is her weakness. Indeed I think both her and Mr. Vesey better than last winter. When will you *blue-stocking* yourself and come amongst us? Consider how many of us are veterans; and, though we do not trudge on foot according to the institution, we may be out at heels—and the heel, you know, Madam, has never been privileged.

2333. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 17, 1784.

Naturally, Madam, I should rejoice on a favourite niece[2] being married to a young lord of the great rank, character, and figure of Lord Euston; and much more, on my family's acquiring the honour of alliance with your Ladyship's; yet that satisfaction is much abated by the circumstance of the Duke of Grafton's disapprobation. I am not fond of matches where any proper consent is wanting. Still I flatter myself that as my niece's birth, fortune, and character made her in every light a suitable party, except for his Grace's younger children, Lord Euston will not be thought to have made a very ineligible choice; and I do hope that Lady Ravensworth and your Ladyship do not condemn him. It does please me to recollect that I have often talked to you, when I could not have the most glimmering idea of such an event, of the uncommon understanding of Lady Euston. The dignity of her conduct on the wretched behaviour of Lord Egremont, did deserve a man of nobler principles; and fate has amply compensated by giving her one who has acted as honourably as the other meanly. I am not likely to see the consequences; it would grieve me should they prove what are threatened; but I will venture to foretell that if sense and sweetness of temper can constitute the chief felicity of a husband, Lord Euston will not be unhappy. Still, he will do me the justice to say, that in the only

[1] Mrs. Vesey.—Berry.

[2] The writer's grand-niece, Lady Charlotte Maria Waldegrave, daughter of Lord Waldegrave and the Duchess of Gloucester, married 16th Nov. 1784, to George Henry Fitzroy, Earl of Euston, afterwards (1811) Duke of Grafton (died 1844).—Cunningham.

interview I have had the honour of having with him since the marriage was in question, I told him nobody could advise him to risk his father's displeasure. I have most strictly adhered to that declaration; and when I saw my niece the next day (the sole time I have seen her since) I entreated her to break off the connection entirely. This justification I owe to the long friendship, Madam, with which you have honoured me: it is not due to any one else, nor should I condescend to make it but to you. However flattered I may be by the alliance, I would not have obtained it by staking Lord Euston's fortune, nor by shocking a father's authority, however harshly, and I think unreasonably exerted. A letter from Lady Waldegrave this morning acquainted me that the marriage was solemnised yesterday.

I am in utter ignorance of anything else that could help out a letter. The papers tell me that the Dutch are drowning their country to save it. It puts me in mind of an old Pagan parable. The priests of the God of fire and those of the God of water agreed on a duel between their principals—what a pity *that* etiquette has been disused! The aquatic champion was clad, for armour, in a jug, bored with holes stopped by wax. Emperor Flame advanced with all the fervour of his element: Mynheer Neptune received the onset with *sang froid;* Cæsar pushed on; the wax dissolved, an inundation burst forth—and Vulcan was extinguished—and so be it! How the imperial vulture of Russia must long to extend a talon, and carry off a limb of another republic!

Since I adjusted the affair between Lord Orford and Cav. Mozzi, I have heard nothing of Mr. Morice, who was then at Ischia, and better, and, as he always is, whether better or worse, in good spirits.

Pray, Madam, revere Uncle Methusalem; Lord Euston makes the fifty-sixth of my nephews, nieces, and great nephews and nieces. Two Fitzroys will not stop the lengthening of the line, if it does not break off at the other end!

2334. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 20, 1784.

In obedience to your Ladyship's commands, I write a few words. I certainly cannot disapprove anything you say on the present occasion. Much less do I disagree with you in thinking that any

fervour on your Ladyship's part would but do hurt. Indeed, the only part I take myself is to recommend perfect silence, which I shall strictly observe myself. I told Lady Euston my opinion, as it was my duty; both when she told me of the proposal, and when I thought it entirely broken off. When anything is over, though contrary to one's opinion, good nature, as well as good sense, bids one take the favourable side. My disposition always inclines me to be partial to young people and young passions; and, therefore, it was no effort to exchange prudence for kind wishes. Mine are so very barren, that I am not even likely to see them fulfilled, should they ever be!

I could only vary my expressions, Madam, if I wrote more on this subject; nor should I have said so much but to you. When one can do no service, silence is the only *succedaneum*.

2335. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Sunday night, Nov. 28, 1784.

I HAVE received the parcel of papers you sent me, which I conclude come from Lord Strafford, and will apply them as well as I possibly can, you may be sure, but with little hope of doing any good; humanity is no match for cruelty. There are now and then such angelic beings as Mr. Hanway and Mr. Howard; but our race in general is pestilently bad and malevolent. I have been these two years wishing to promote my excellent friend Mr. Porter's plan for alleviating the woes of chimney-sweepers, but never could make impression on three people; on the contrary, have generally caused a smile.

George Conway's intelligence of hostilities commenced between the Dutch and Imperialists makes me suppose that France will support the former—or could they resist? Yet I had heard that France would not. Some have thought, as I have done, that a combination of partition would happen between Austria, France, and Prussia, the modern law of nations for avoiding wars. I know nothing: so my conjectures may all be erroneous; especially as one argues from reason; a very inadequate judge, as it leaves passions, caprices, and accidents out of its calculation. It does not seem the interest of France, that the Emperor's power should increase in their neighbourhood and extend to the sea. Consequently it is France's interest to protect

Holland in concert with Prussia. This last is a transient power, and may determine on the death of the present King; but the Imperial is a permanent force, and must be the enemy of France, however present connections may incline the scale.

In any case, I hope we shall no way be hooked into the quarrel; not only from the impotence of our circumstances, but as I think it would decide the loss of Ireland, which seems tranquillising: but should we have any bickering with France, she would renew the manœuvres she practised so fatally in America. These are my politics; I do not know with whose they coincide or disagree, nor does it signify a straw. Nothing will depend on my opinion; nor have I any opinion about them, but when I have nothing at all to do that amuses me more, or nothing else to fill a letter.

I can give you a sample of my idleness, which may divert Lady Aylesbury and your Academy of arts and sciences for a minute in the evening. It came into my head yesterday to send a card to Lady Lyttelton, to ask when she would be in town; here it is in an heroic epistle:—

> From a Castle as vast as the castles on signs,—
> From a hill that all Africa's molehills outshines,
> This epistle is sent to a Cottage so small,
> That the door cannot ope if you stand in the hall,
> To a lady who would be fifteen, if her knight
> And old swain were as young as Methusalem quite:
> It comes to inquire, not whether her eyes
> Are as radiant as ever, but how many sighs
> He must vent to the rocks and the echoes around
> (Though nor echo nor rock in the parish is found),
> Before she, obdurate, his passion will meet—
> His passion to see her in Portugal-street?

As the sixth line goes rather too near the core, do not give a copy of it: however, I should be sorry if it displeased; though I do not believe it will, but be taken with good-humour as it was meant.[1]

[1] It was taken in perfect good humour; and Lady Lyttelton returned the following answer, which Mr. Walpole owned was better than his address;

> Remember'd, though old, by a wit and a beau!
> I shall fancy, ere long, I'm a Ninon l'Enclos:
> I must feel impatient such kindness to meet,
> And shall hasten my flight into Portugal-street.
> *Ripley Cottage, 28th Nov.* —Berry

2336. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 2, 1784.

You must not be surprised at a little inertness in my correspondence, though not yet trespassing on my regularity, when you consider the season of the year, the tranquillity of the times, and my age, which confines itself to a few elderly folk, as retired from the world as myself. Though the depth of winter, I am not yet settled in town; though I now and then lie here for a night or two, to diversify the scene, and not to live totally in the country, the air of which does not agree with me so well as that of London, purified by a million of fires.

I can tell you nothing but what the 'Gazette' has anticipated—two or three promotions, and the creation of two Marquises;[1] meagre articles after three wars, and as many revolutions of Administrations! This enormous capital, that must have some occupation, is most innocently amused with those philosophic playthings, air-balloons. But, as half a million of people that impassion themselves for any object are always more childish than children, the good souls of London are much fonder of the *airgonauts* than of the toys themselves. Lunardi, the Neapolitan Secretary, is said to have bought three or four thousand pounds in the stocks, by exhibiting his person, his balloon, and his dog and cat, at the 'Pantheon' for a shilling each visitor. Blanchard, a Frenchman, is his rival; and I expect that they will soon have an air-fight in the clouds, like a stork and a kite.

I do not know half so much of the war between the Austrian Eagle and the Frogs, though they say it grows very serious. The latter began the attack by a deluge:[2] but that war is like a theatric tragedy; the principal actors seldom appear in the first scenes; the second act may be opened by France and Prussia.

There has been another Fitzroyal match[3] in my family. Lord Euston[4] has married my niece, Lady Maria Waldegrave, the

[1] Earl Temple, made Marquis of Buckingham; and the Earl of Shelburne, Marquis of Lansdowne.—Walpole.

[2] By opening the dykes.—Walpole.

[3] Between Mr. Fitzroy, eldest son of Lord Southampton, and Miss Laura Keppel.—Walpole.

[4] Eldest son of Augustus Henry, Duke of Grafton.—Walpole.

Duchess of Gloucester's daughter. The bride has every possible merit—merit put to the test by that wretch Lord Egremont;[1] and on him she is thus nobly revenged. Lord Euston has behaved with as much honour as the other wanted.

Dec. 5th.

As your Court is so linked with Vienna, I suppose it looks stedfastly towards the Scheldt; though perhaps as much in the dark as the village of Twickenham, whither I am returned. Your Holy neighbour, no doubt, rejoices that Huguenot commerce is thought a preferable morsel to the temporalities of the Church, which I suspect to have been a weighty ingredient in Cæsar's late reformations,[2] as they were in Luther's. Nor will he squander them, as Henry the Eighth did, on his courtiers. Modern conquests, too, as well as reformations, are grown to have more substantial views than anciently, when fame and glory were the chief incentives. I do not recollect reading that, when Alexander vanquished Porus, he loaded elephants with diamonds and lacks of rupees. Since the world grew wiser, Thamas Kouli Kan carried off all the brilliants and rubies of the Mogul's golden throne; ay, and I dare to swear, the gold too. Why is so much of America, yet unpeopled, unknown? but because no hero expects to find mines in cold and desolate regions. If air-balloons could reach the moon, I believe the first inquiry of philosophers would be after *the Specie* in the planet. Otaheite and all the Owyhees, and New Holland and New Zealand, will be left to return to their primitive obscurity, because they have nothing more intrinsic than hogs and red feathers. Yet science pretended to make the expedition! Science is perfectly content with the very little it has learnt. The sublime legislatress of Russia, who has millions and millions of acres more than she knows what to do with, has more appetite for the plunder of Constantinople, than for peopling and civilising the tracts of globe she possesses as far as China. Dr. Young was not a little mistaken when he imagined that "the universal passion" of mankind was fame.

9th, Berkeley Square again.

I saw a gentleman this morning who had just received a letter from his brother at Paris, which says, that France is determined to defend the Dutch, and is preparing to march two armies, under Broglio and Maillebois, one of which is destined to Alsace. I don't

[1] Who had been engaged to her.—WALPOLE.
[2] Destruction of convents.—WALPOLE.

pretend to guess whether that interposition will prevent or extend war. *The time when* is of consequence only to those in being; and, therefore, there is more meaning than appears at first in our form of prayer, "Give peace in *our* time, O Lord!" The world will never be long free from that scourge, war; and whether the passions put on the mask, or throw it off, mankind will be equally sacrificed. Adieu!

2337. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 9, 1784

I CAN answer Lady Anne's salique query very easily, Madam, or rather I cannot; but I believe that, even when Edward VI. died, there was not a single prince living who descended in the direct male line from any king since the Conquest. Numerous as were the sons of Edward III., only Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, continued the masculine line, and I cannot (upon memory alone) affirm that. If he did, the Duke of Buckingham, beheaded by Henry VIII., had, *saliquely* speaking, the best title to the Crown. The Beauforts are doubly illegitimate, being descended from a bastard of one of John of Ghent's legitimated issue. I doubt, therefore, whether, enacting the salique law here would not, in any period, have been a dangerous measure; at least, I know nowhere of an uninterrupted male genealogy of genuine princes but in Wales; and it would occasion an inundation of civil wars, before the Heralds' Office could settle which Mr. Price, or which Mr. Williams, or which Mr. Philipps, is the genuine heir of our true British princes.

I am sure I do not mean to arrogate a right in myself, nor pretend to say how near I stand to the Crown; but I have a pedigree of my mother, drawn up by the late Sir John Philipps, my cousin, and father of the present Lord Milford, in which it is clear that we are descended from Cadwallader. I really do not believe Sir John had any ambitious views himself, for, though he gave himself all that trouble, I believe it was only meant as a compliment to his cousin, the wife of the then Prime Minister, or, at most, a hint to her that so noble a prince ought to be, at least, a Commissioner of the Customs; and I am the more inclined to acquit his Royal Highness, my cousin, of any intention of disturbing the established succession from personal views, as (from no resentment, I believe, for not obtaining a

place in the Custom House) he became a very zealous and active Jacobite, and, at last, died in very good odour with his present Majesty.

Thus you see, Madam, whichever way I turn myself, I have royal or Fitzroyal connections; and yet, however beneficial it might be to me and my relations on Cadwallader's side, I cannot come into your Ladyship's scheme of a salique law here. At least I hope you will repeal the Marriage Act first—for two reasons; one, that our present princes may have as many lawful male heirs as possible; and the other, that our princesses may not be forced to scamper to Gretna Green, in order to supply the Crown with heirs,—which they would not do, if their children were not *habile* to succeed.

I luckily arrived in town the eve of dreadful yesterday. I came for my *waiting* to-night in Cavendish Square, and did mean to return to Strawberry to-morrow, and thence go on Saturday to Park-place; but since Boreas and Æolus, and all the demons of the air, are let loose, I shall keep myself as warm as I can, and not venture being laid up with the gout and compounded in snow as I was some years ago at Ampthill, and then forced to have a track hewn for me by the charity of my hosts.

May I beg to consult your Ladyship on a case of conscience? I think I ought to wait on Lady Ravensworth on a late event; and yet I am so afraid of doing a wrong or seemingly impertinent thing, that I have not ventured yet. Pray tell me seriously whether I should or not.

I have neither seen the Carmelite nor Holman, nor anything, or almost anybody else. You don't consider that I was a contemporary of Dugdale and Ashmole, that I am or ought to be superannuated, and that I know no more of the present generation, than if Deucalion and Pyrrha had just tossed them over their shoulders and restocked the earth. Alas! I have lost most of those that used to inhabit it in my days! and a teacup full of deluge would wash me away too.

2338. TO DR. JOSEPH WARTON[1]

Berkeley Square, Dec. 9, 1784.

I AM very much obliged to you, Sir, for your repeated kindness and communications; and was much pleased at the sight of both

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

the letters of Voltaire and Mr. Windham, which I return with thanks and gratitude. Both are curious in different ways. Voltaire's English would be good English in any other foreigner; but a man who gave himself the air of criticising our—and, I will say, the world's—greatest author, ought to have been a better master of our language, though this letter and his commentary prove that he could neither write it nor read it accurately and intelligently.

That little triumph, however, I shall decline; I mean, I will make no use of his letter. It would be a still poorer scrap than it is, if curtailed; and I would by no means be accessory to printing the first part, in which I am happy to find you agree with me. Indeed, it would be publishing scandal, and to the vexation of an innocent gentleman. I condemn exceedingly all publication of private letters in which living persons are named.[1] I thought it scandalous to print Lord Chesterfield's and President Montesquieu's letters. It is cruel to the writers, cruel to the persons named, and is a practice that would destroy private intercourse in a great measure. What father could venture to warn his son against the company of such or such a person if it were likely that a Curll or a Mrs. Stanhope would print his letter with the names at length? I detained my own fourth volume of 'Painters' for nine years, though there is certainly no abuse in it, lest it should not satisfy the children of some of those artists.

Still I am far, Sir, from carrying this delicacy so far as some expect. I would respect the characters of the living, and the feelings of their children. I should not have so much management for their grandchildren, who may have a full portion of pride about their ancestry, but certainly have very rarely a grain of affectionate tenderness for them. I did give much offence to some persons who yearned with those genealogic duties, by my 'Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors:' but I did not care a straw. Indeed, if every bad man who has had the honour of being great-grandfather to some one or other, was to be spared for fear of shocking his noble descendants, History would be as fulsome as dedications were some years ago. Philip II. was ancestor to half the monarchs of Europe, may not he be branded as a monster without offence to their majesties?

The anecdote on Pollio in the other letter did not at all surprise me. Indeed, does not the late 'Diary' [Dodington's] teem with

[1] See Letter to Dalrymple, 23rd Jan. 1770.—Cunningham.

instances of similar growth? Nor is it any longer strange that Lord Melcombe should leave such a proof of his own—I know not what to call it! Has not he seemed proud of recording his own variations, and contradictions, and flattery!

I will say no more on that subject, Sir, but turn to another in which *you* are more interested. In the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for last month there is a pretended discovery of the name of the unfortunate Lady to whose memory Mr. Pope wrote his Elegy. The writer of that communication corroborates too the circumstance of the sword. But I believe he is quite mistaken in both; at least, my Lady Hervey, who was acquainted with Pope, and who lived at the time, gave me a very different name, and told me the exit was made in a less dignified manner—by the rope.[1] I have never spread this, from the reasons I have given you in the former part of the letter: I do not know but some of the family may be living—nor is one bound to tell the world all one knows. I shall not have the same reserve to you, Sir, when I have the pleasure of seeing you, which I am glad to hear will be soon. I am, Sir,

Your grateful and most obedient servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2339. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Dec. 27, 1784.

I AM told that I am in a prodigious fine way; which, being translated into plain English, means, that I have suffered more sharp pain these two days than in all the moderate fits together that I have had for these last nine years: however, Madam, I have one great blessing, there is drowsiness in all the square hollows of the red-hot bars of the gridiron on which I lie, so that I scream and fall asleep by turns like a babe that is cutting its first teeth. I can add nothing to this exact account, which I only send in obedience to your Ladyship's commands, which I received just now: I did think on Saturday that the worst was over.

[1] "After many and wide inquiries, I have been informed [by Walpole?] that her name was Wainsbury; and that (which is a singular circumstance) she was as ill-shaped and deformed as our author. Her death was not by a sword, but, what would less bear to be told poetically, she hanged herself." *Joseph Warton* (Pope's Works, ed. 1797, vol. i. p. 336); see also Johnson's Lives by Cunningham, vol. iii. p. 18.—CUNNINGHAM.

2340. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 3, 1785.

I AM much obliged to your Ladyship and Lord Ossory: I am essentially better, and quite contented, for my pains are gone. It is not so easy to recover what I had not—strength; and, consequently, I am as low and languid as possible; but having no occasion for myself, I am very indifferent about the little progress I make. I return your Ladyship's new-year's compliments with wishes, I hope, better founded.

2341. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 4, 1785.

I HAD the great satisfaction last week of receiving your letter, my dear Sir, written with your own hand to confirm the progress of your recovery; but I was not able to answer it myself, being confined to my bed by a severe fit of the gout too. I could only dictate a few lines to your nephew, to beg he would express my joy and thanks to you, and tell you why I did not write myself. Indeed, he had the kindness to send me word that he had received one too from you by the same post, and with the same good news. Poor young man! while you thought him fox-hunting, he was prisoner also to the same illness, but less slight than ours. I told him we formed a triangle of gouty correspondence.

I have since received another from you, of December 18th: but, indeed, I have not wanted consolations, for Monsieur de Soyres sent me word from Florence of your amendment, and Lord and Lady Mount-Edgcumbe have been so friendly as to furnish me constantly with the accounts they received of you from their son—a clear proof that he was satisfied with the marks of attention you were capable of giving him. I have not seen them yet; for, like you, I have not been allowed to see company and talk, nor, indeed, could I to be heard. Though I have never had the gout in my stomach, yet my breast is so weak that it is always the part principally affected, and, consequently, whence I conclude my dissolution will come. You, I fear, have suffered dreadfully, though you do not say so: your patience, and calmness, and good-humour are just what they were five-and-forty years ago. I am happy that your

stamina are as strong too as they were: they must be to have weathered such an attack! Indeed, I have great comfort in your tranquillity and resignation about the event. I, who have gone through so many more of these assaults, who wonder how I have stood them, and who always expect the next to be the conclusive one, have often called it dying *à plusieurs reprises*. I am not impatient for what *must* happen; but, when one has *tried on* death so often, it must be more familiar to one. Could I choose, it should come at once at the beginning of a fit: I dread the ceremonial, and to know one's house is full of relations and inquirers. My exit, I hope, will be in the country; where I always keep my illness as secret as I can.[1]

You perceive I am writing to you with a lame hand, and with the only one I have at liberty; the other, muffled up, just holds my paper. I am now weary, and shall go to bed; but, knowing I could not write much at once, I had the precaution to begin my letter three days before the post, and shall add to it at leisure.

5th.

I resume my letter, rather to finish than to add to it. A correspondence between two sick bedchambers at the distance of a thousand miles must be very lifeless. What news can we tell one another but how we rested last night? and that last night will have been a fortnight ago when the post arrives. Kings and Empresses, of whom we were forced to talk from want of reciprocal acquaintance in our several residences, must be out of our thoughts: can we care what interludes they are playing when we are quitting the theatre? We see them in their true light, and know that they too, in a little time, must leave their crowns and sceptres to be worn by other performers.

The pantomime carrying on at Florence and Rome is entertaining. So, the Pope who would not grant the title of King to the Pretender allows his no-Majesty to have created a Duchess; and the Cardinal of York, who is but a rag of the Papacy, and who must think his brother a King, will not allow her title! Well! it is well they have not power to do worse, nor can spill the blood of others in their foolish squabbles.

Lord Mount-Edgcumbe has been here this evening. I assure you, it is impossible to be more satisfied than he is with your attentions to his son; who has written, that, to the last moment of

[1] Walpole died in London, in Berkeley Square.—CUNNINGHAM.

his stay at Florence, there was no mark of friendship you omitted, nor any services you did not render him. I know better than they can, how much he was obliged to you.—Heavens! attentions for travelling boys when one is on the rack! Oh! my dear Sir, I will recommend no more to you, lest they should find you in a fit of the gout. You never did too little, but often too much, and more than your health and constitution could bear. Adieu!

2342. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Jan. 16, 1785.

I AM always thanking you, Madam, I think, for kind inquiries after me; but it is not my fault that I am so often troublesome! I would it were otherwise!—however, I do not complain. I have attained another resurrection, and was so glad of my liberty, that I went out both Saturday and Sunday, though so snowy a day and so rainy a day never were invented. Yet I have not ventured to see Mrs. Jordan,[1] nor to skate in Hyde Park. We had other guess winters in my time!—fine sunny mornings, with now and then a mild earthquake, just enough to wake one, and rock one to sleep again comfortably. My recoveries surprise me more than my fits; but I am quite persuaded now that I know exactly how I shall end: as I am a statue of chalk, I shall crumble to powder, and then my inside will be blown away from my terrace, and hoary-headed Margaret will tell the people that come to see my house,—

"One morn we miss'd him on the 'custom'd hill."[2]

When that is the case, Madam, don't take the pains of inquiring more, as I shall leave no *body* to return to, even Cagliostro would bring me back to no purpose. By the way, is not it curious, that when credulity and superstition are so far exploded, that even a cardinal is abandoned by bishops and clergy, and left to the civil power, there should still be dupes to such a mountebank as Cagliostro? I have been told that Prince Ferdinand himself had faith in him. I know that our late King, though not apt to believe more than his neighbours, had no doubt of the existence of vampires

[1] Dora Bland, Mrs. Jordan; at this time (1785) commencing her career as an actress in the parts of Viola, Imogen, Hypolita, and Miss Hoyden —CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Gray.—CUNNINGHAM.

and their banquets on the dead. Dr. Johnson seems to have been the representative in epitome of all the contradictions in human nature.

Your Ladyship may be sure I am happy in Lady Euston's good fortune, not only in the Duke's being reconciled, but in obtaining Lady Ravensworth's favourable opinion. It has always been mine, that her paternal understanding and temper would pierce at last through all clouds. She still in my eyes wants one essential boon from fortune to complete her felicity; and though I may not live to see that moment, I hope your Ladyship will then allow that I gave a just character of her, when I could have no idea of what has happened since.

Most of the diversions that I have given up, cost me no regrets; but I own I should have enjoyed the play at Ampthill: indeed, you might have made me a little amends by sending me the *Prologue* or *Epilogue*, instead of a charade which I shall never guess. In revenge, here is one, which I hope you will all find as uncrackable: General Conway, who never rests till he has mastered one, miscarried: "*Ma première partie fait aller, ma seconde fait reculer, mon tout fait rire et pleurer.*"

General Burgoyne's 'Heiress,' I hear, succeeded extremely well, and was, besides, excellently acted. Have you had patience, Madam, to wade through Mr. Hayley's 'Old Maids?' I could not; and can you guess why he wrote them, unless to sell *three* volumes? That sot Boswell is a classic in comparison.

You know, to be sure, Madam, that Lady Brudenel is dead; everybody laments her, for she was perfectly unexceptionable. I have lost a very old friend, one of my oldest, and a most worthy man, Lord Dacre; but after forty years of miserable sufferings, his death was charming, and not two hours in duration from his seizure. We who are dead in equity, though not in law, should hope for such conclusions, and have former preludes discounted.

Sir William Hamilton, I am told, has been probing Vesuvius, and announces a more dreadful explosion than ever. Lord and Lady Spencer have ascended the mountain, while the lava boiled over the opposite brim. I should have no thirst for such bumpers.

My hand, you see, Madam, has obeyed you very debonnairly; I am sorry I had no better materials. I have straws enough, but I don't find that I have good brick.

P.S. I am not such a *blockhead* as I thought I was: I believe *that* is the key to your charade. My French one is as just.

2343. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 2, 1785.

I WOULD not write to you again, my dear Sir, till I could tell you that I was quite recovered; and that I could not say with any truth till within these few days, for I had a relapse, of which I was much worse than from the first attack. The gout passed out of my limbs into my bowels, was sent back, changed itself into a cough, and fell on my lungs: but all are gone, and I am so well, that I should have taken the air to-day in my coach if it had not been too hard a frost. In short, we are both met again on this side of the world; for one may call it *meeting*, as an Englishman and a Frenchman would seem countrymen if they met in the deserts of Tartary: formerly one should have said, in India; but *there* the two nations have proved that they are not such familiar friends.

Your last would have made me uneasy by your still remaining in bed, had it not all been written by your own hand; and had not you kindly foreseen my apprehension, and told me kindly, I hope truly, that you remained there only in complaisance to your physician. We are both deceptions: who that saw *you* in your youth, or *me* from my infancy till now, would have believed that we should live, after men grown, to correspond for four-and-forty years? For my part, I suppose that Hercules, if he had not gone mad, would have died of a consumption. We have both renewed our leases, and I hope our correspondence will still become much more venerable for its longevity. We are certainly epistolary patriarchs.

To say the truth, I cannot resume the thread with much interest. Nothing has happened here during the seven weeks of my confinement worth repeating. The Parliament is met, but as quietly as a quarter session. The Opposition seems quelled, or to despair; nor has the town contributed more than the two Houses to the fund of news.

The great scene that Europe expected is said to be laid aside, and that France has signified to the Dutch that they must submit to the Emperor, and that they will—happy news for one or two hundred thousand of the living! Whether the mass of murder will be diminished in future by that arrangement is another question. The revival of the kingdom of Austrian Lombardy[1] looks as if the

[1] Which is what the emperor meditated.—WALPOLE.

Eagle's eastern wing would expand itself as well as the western; and so I recollect I hinted to you two years ago that I expected it would.

If the town does not do something odd and worth repeating within these two days, I must send away my letter, squab as it is. I cannot coin news, though so easy a practice, as our newspapers prove by the daily lies they publish—I will not say *invent;* for thousands, who get nothing by the manufacture, help the printers to numberless falsehoods. Our newspapers are deservedly forbidden in France for impudent scandal on the French Queen. I am always ashamed that such cargoes of abuse should be dispersed all over Europe; and frequently our handsomest women are the themes. What Iroquois must we seem to the rest of the world!

Feb. 4th.

London is very perverse, and will not furnish me with another paragraph; one would think it had taken spite to our immortal correspondence. Formerly, after a Long Vacation, people used to be impatient to signalise themselves by some extravagance or absurdity. They are as tame now as if the Millennium was commenced.[1]

I went out yesterday to take the air, but it fatigued me. Last night it snowed again, and I have stayed at home: but I shall recover; my appetite is perfect, and my sleep is marvellous. I don't know why I am not as sleek as a dormouse. Pray give me as good an account of yourself. Have you driven yet in your coach to the Cascines or the foot of Fiesoli? or about the streets to the Duomo and Annunziata, as I used to do in the heat of the day, for the mere

[1] Mrs. Hannah More, writing to her sister about this time, tells her,—"I believe I mentioned that a foreign ambassador, Count Adhemar, had a stroke of palsy, and that he was to have had a great assembly on the night of the day on which it happened; it is shocking to relate the sequel. It was on a Sunday. The company went—some hundreds. The man lay deprived of sense and motion; his bedchamber joins the great drawing-room, where was a faro bank held close to his bed's-head. Somebody said they thought they made too much noise. 'Oh, no,' another answered, 'it will do him good; the worst thing he can do is to sleep.' A third said, 'I did not think Adhemar had been a fellow of such rare spirit; palsy and faro together is spirited indeed; this is keeping it up!' I was telling this to Mr. Walpole the other day, and lamenting it as a national stigma, and one of the usual signs of the times I had met with. In return he told me of a French gentleman at Paris, who, being in the article of death, had just signed his will, when the lawyer who drew it up was invited by his wife to stay supper. The table was laid in the dying man's apartment; the lawyer took a glass of wine, and addressing himself to the lady, drank *à la santé de notre aimable agonisant!* I told Mr. Walpole he invented the story to out-do me, but he protested it was literally true."—*Memoirs of Hannah More,* vol. i. p. 396. Perhaps the lady was right.—WRIGHT.

pleasure of looking at the buildings, when everybody else was gone into bed? What a thousand years ago that was! yet I recollect it as if but yesterday! I sometimes think I have lived two or three lives. My thirteen months at Florence was a pleasant youth to one of them. Seven months and a half at Paris, with four or five journeys thither since, was a middle age, quite different from five-and-twenty years in Parliament which had preceded—and an age since! Besides, as I was an infant when my father became Minister, I came into the world at five years old; knew half the remaining Courts of King William and Queen Anne, or heard them talked of as fresh; being the youngest and favourite child, was carried to almost the first operas, kissed the hand of George the First, and am now hearing the frolics of his great-great-grandson;[1]—no, all this cannot have happened in one life! I have seen a mistress of James the Second,[2] the Duke of Marlborough's burial, three or four wars, the whole career, victories, and death of Lord Chatham, the loss of America, the second conflagration of London by Lord George Gordon —and yet I am not so old as Methusalem by four or five centuries!

In short, I can sit and amuse myself with my own memory, and yet find new stores at every audience that I give to it. Then, for private episodes, varieties of characters, political intrigues, literary anecdotes, &c., the profusion that I remember is endless; in short, when I reflect on all I have seen, heard, read, written, the many idle hours I have passed, the nights I have wasted playing at faro, the weeks, nay months, I have spent in pain, you will not wonder that I almost think I have, like Pythagoras, been Panthoides Euphorbus, and have retained one memory in at least two bodies. Adieu!

2344. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, Feb. 5, 1785.

I HAVE not written lately, Madam, because I relapsed, and have been so very ill, the gout falling on my lungs, that I did not know whether before my letter could set out for Ampthill, I should not be obliged to add a postscript from another world, and send you a new direction; but I am recovered, and have even been out twice to take

[1] George, Prince of Wales.—WALPOLE.

[2] Mrs. Godfrey [Arabella Churchill], mother of the Duke of Berwick and Lady Waldegrave.—WALPOLE. Walpole was thirteen years of age at her death, in 1730. —CUNNINGHAM.

the air. This time indeed my recovery was a little artificial, and not entirely owing to my own management and to my Herculean weakness. Sir John Elliot had happened to attend my housemaid, and would not take a fee; to prevail, I pretended to talk on my own gout, and he was so tractable, and suffered me to prescribe to him what he should prescribe to me, without giving me powder of volcanoes and other hot drugs, that I continued to see him; and I do believe, that at the crisis I should not have conducted myself quite so judiciously as he did. This is making very honourable *amende* to the College whom I have always treated with contempt; but as I love my own veracity still more than my own way, I do not haggle about confessing the truth.

As I don't know that your Ladyship is particularly devoted to Hippocrates, perhaps I have tried you by my recantation; but I had nothing of more worth to tell you, and only wrote to excuse my silence.

Your aunt, Lady Dowager Gower, is dying of a similar accident to poor Lady Strafford's, in whom the mortification is said to be begun. As much as I shall pity Lord Strafford, it is impossible to be sorry for her. She had burnt off one ear, and part of the other and was likely to lose one of her eyes.

The news of my coffee-house, since I began my letter, is, that Lady Strathmore eloped last night, taking her two maids with her; but no swain is talked of. The town, they say, is empty: it certainly does not produce its usual complement of extravagancies, when one solitary elopement of a veteran madwoman is all that is at market.

2345. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, March 5, 1785.

Your letter of the 8th of last month, telling me that your great illness had *not* been the gout, surprised me much, as we had had no other account of it. I had indeed wondered at your being blooded for it, which is not the treatment of the gout in the stomach here. Whatever your disorder was, thank God it is gone!

For my part, I am still a prisoner, and have been so above three entire months; the longest fit I ever had but one. Indeed, the third relapse is but now going off. Relapses! no wonder! from the beginning of December we have had such a succession of vicissitudes of all kinds of bad weather as I never remember: repeated snows,

severe frosts, fogs, sudden rains, and assassinating winds have made everybody ill, or kept them so. All my hope is from the Almanac, which tells me that spring is at hand; yet the month of March, like the fast on the vigil of a saint's festival, is very apt to prepare one by rigour for rejoicing.

I have heard nothing lately about your nephew. I fear his holidays too are not arrived yet. His friends and mine, the poor Duke and Duchess of Montrose, are exceedingly happy: Lord Graham is just married to Lord Ashburnham's daughter, a pretty amiable young woman. They have long been anxious to see him settled. He is a pattern of sons, and their sole remaining comfort under such a complication of miseries as they have been and are afflicted with.[1]

Though we are nearer to the promised field of battle than you are, we know no more of the Dutch war, nor whether it is to be accommodated. The politicians of our coffee-houses are easily diverted from continental objects when they have the least food at home, as is natural; and we have a few topics that are not quite indifferent. The most recent, and consequently the theme of the day, is the demolition of the scrutiny for Westminster: the Opposition renewed the motion for ordering the High Bailiff to make the return, and carried the question by a majority of *thirty-eight;* and yesterday he did return Lord Hood and Mr. Fox.[2] At night there were great illuminations. I expected to have catched a great cold; for, the mob at eleven o'clock at night knocking at my door with their commands, I rung my bell in great haste for candles, for fear of having my windows broken, as they were two years ago, when I had the gout too; and the servants running in to draw up the curtains, and leaving all the doors open, turned my room from a hot-house to an ice-house: however, I got no damage.

Sunday, 6th.

We are threatened with illuminations again to-morrow night, as they talk of Mr. Fox being carried in procession to the House of Commons in the morning. I wish some mischief do not happen; our new generation are rather bacchanalian, and not averse to being

[1] The Duke of Montrose had been totally blind for above thirty years, was very deaf, and had lost the use of his legs. His duchess, Lady Lucy Manners, was paralytic; and they had lost their only daughter, Lady Lucy, wife of Mr. Archibald Douglas.—WALPOLE.

[2] The Court had instituted the scrutiny in favour of Sir Cecil Wray, the third candidate, to exclude Mr. Charles Fox, whom the king detested for being attached to the Prince of Wales.—WALPOLE.

riotous under the *Princeps Juventutis*.[1] However, what is foreseen, seldom happens. I believe that, of Argus's hundred eyes, those saw best that looked backward—and wise prophets took the hint. We know pretty well now that dreams, which used to pass for predictions, are imperfect recollections.

Being no soothsayer, I will anticipate nothing about Ireland, which is to be the next great question. However it has happened, we have for some years resembled gamesters of fortune, who play to know whether *their own* shall remain theirs.

Tuesday, 8th.

There were illuminations again last night, but I hear of no riot or mischief, except of some fractures of glass in my square: a few panes were broken at my next door, in the windows of her Dowager Grace of Beaufort,[2] who would not put out lights; and many in those of Lady Mary Coke, who never misses an opportunity of being an Amazon, or a Martyr, or a Tragedy Queen. She puts me in mind of the Duchess of Albemarle,[3] who was mad with pride. The first Duke of Montagu married her as Emperor of China; and to her death she was served on the knee, taking her maids for ladies of the bedchamber.

We have still such parching easterly winds that I dare not venture abroad, but I shall take the air the moment the sun lands.

9th.

This letter was written, and was going to the Secretary's Office, when your nephew came in, just arrived in town; and, as he sets out on Saturday on his visit to you, I detained my despatch, as I can write more freely by him than I would by French, German, or Tuscan Post-offices.

[1] The Prince.—WALPOLE.

[2] Miss Berkeley, sister of the late Lord Bottetort, and widow of Lord Noel Somerset, Duke of Beaufort.—WALPOLE.

[3] Widow of Christopher, second Duke of Albemarle. As she was a coheiress of the last Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, she enjoyed an immense fortune; and, being mad, was confined at Montagu House, but served with royal state. Her relations pretended she was dead, and the duke was forced to produce her in Westminster Hall. After his death, she lived at Clerkenwell, and 3000*l.* a-year was allowed for her imaginary court. The rest was laid up, and went to her own relations. The story of her second marriage was introduced into the last act of Cibber's comedy of 'Sir Courtly Nice.' Lady Mary Coke endeavoured to persuade people that she had been married to Edward Duke of York, the king's brother; and after his death [1767]. signed her letters and notes *Marye*, with an almost invisible *e* in the tail of the *y*.—WALPOLE. Walpole is wandering. 'Sir Courtly Nice' is by Crowne, not Cibber. The comedy in which the story of her second marriage is introduced is 'The Double Gallant, or Sick Lady's Cure,' by Cibber. See the story in Granger, vol. iv. p. 158 (Ed. 1775), told there from the information of Walpole. See also vol. iv. (of this edition of Walpole's Letters) p. 123.—CUNNINGHAM.

We are certainly in a very embarrassing situation with Ireland. Our raw boy of a Minister [Mr. Pitt] has most rashly and unadvisedly plunged himself into a great difficulty, and promised to that country much more than was necessary.[1] The dissatisfaction, however, is not near so great here as might have been expected; yet, as it will certainly meet with many other discontents, which Mr. Pitt's ignorance and inexperience, not at all cooled by his vanity and insolence, have sown, his situation grows but tottering. The rapidly-chosen Parliament seems by no means firm; and the outrageous injustice of the scrutiny at Westminster, which was solely set on and maintained by royal vengeance, has fallen on the Ministers, who wished to be rid of it, but not to be beaten by 38.[2] However, I fancy the author[3] is still more mortified than they are: Fox has triumphed over him as Wilkes did.

Monday last did not pass so quietly as I had heard at first: the new Marquis of Buckingham, who had been profuse of lights last Friday, thought he had done enough, and would not exhibit one on Monday. The mob demolished his windows. Two young rioters of rank, who *said* they were only innocent spectators, were beaten and taken prisoners by the Marquis's domestics, and carried before him. He assuming great dignity, the two young gentlemen let loose a torrent of very coarse appellations. Next morning he recollected himself, and made submissions in proportion to the abuse he had *received*, not *given*. This is the story on one side. On the other, it is affirmed, that only one young gentleman was carried into the house, and, being taken for one of the mob, was threatened with a constable by the Marquis, who, on discovering his error, made proper excuses. In short, in such a season of party violence, one cannot learn the truth of what happens in next street: future historians, however, will know it exactly, and, what is more, people will believe them!

We have a mass of matters besides on the carpet; as, India in several branches, the reform of Parliament, the late taxes, and more to be laid. Pitt has certainly amazing Parliamentary abilities; he has not yet given any indication of others; and, if he gains experience, it is likely to be at his own cost. His measures hitherto have been precipitate and indigested.

The latest colour of affairs on the Continent is crimson.

[1] The famous propositions for equal trade with Ireland.—WALPOLE.
[2] The number of the majority for closing the scrutiny.—WALPOLE.
[3] The King.—WALPOLE.

Maestricht is said to be invested by the Emperor. As this letter will not pass under your Great Duke's eye,[1] to whom it would not be well-bred to say so, I may tell you that I abhor his brother, whose rapine and reformations are conducted with equal injustice and cruelty; and, when they are so, I suspect the former to be the motive of the latter. I am only comforted by hoping he vexes the King of Prussia. If those two men and the Czarina could plague one another without consequences to thousands, one should delight in their broils.

I hope, for yours, his, and my sake, that your nephew will find you quite recovered: his impatience to see you is most amiable; but you deserve it. Adieu!

2346. TO MISS HANNAH MORE.

Berkeley Square, April 5, 1785.

HAD I not heard part of your conversation with Mrs. Carter the other night, Madam, I should certainly not have discovered the authoress of the very ingenious anticipation of our future jargon.[2]

[1] The Great-Duke opened all letters before they were delivered.—WALPOLE.

[2] This is an answer to the following anonymous letter, sent to Mr. Walpole by Miss H. More, ridiculing the prevailing adoption of French idioms into the English language. In this satirical epistle there is neither one French word nor one English idiom:

"A Specimen of the English Language, as it will probably be written and spoken in the next century. In a letter from a lady to her friend, in the reign of George the Fifth.

"DEAR MADAM, *Alamode Castle, June* 20, 1840.

"I no sooner found myself here than I visited my new apartment, which is composed of five pieces: the small room, which gives upon the garden, is practised through the great one; and there is no other issue. As I was quite exceeded with fatigue, I had no sooner made my toilette, than I let myself fall on a bed of repose, where sleep came to surprise me.

"My lord and I are on the intention to make good cheer, and a great expense, and this country is in possession to furnish wherewithal to amuse oneself. All that England has of illustrious, all that youth has of amiable, or beauty of ravishing, sees itself in this quarter. Render yourself here, then, my friend; and you shall find assembled all that there is of best, whether for letters, whether for birth.

"Yesterday I did my possible to give to eat; the dinner was of the last perfection, and the wines left nothing to desire. The repast was seasoned with a thousand rejoicing sallies, full of salt and agreement, and one more brilliant than another. Lady Frances charmed me as for the first time; she is made to paint, has a great air, and has infinitely of expression in her physiognomy; her manners have as much of natural as her figure has of interesting.

"I had prayed Lady B. to be of this dinner, as I had heard nothing but good of her; but I am now disabused on her subject: she is past her first youth, had very little instruction, is inconsequent, and subject to caution; but having evaded, with one of her pretenders, her reputation has been committed by the bad faith of a friend,

How should I? I am not fortunate enough to know all your talents; nay, I question whether you yourself suspect all you possess. Your 'Bas Bleu' is in a style very different from any of your other productions that I have seen; and this letter, which shows your intuition into the degeneracy of our language, has a vein of humour and satire that could not be calculated from your 'Bas Bleu,' in which good-nature and good-humour had made a great deal of learning wear all the ease of familiarity. I did wish you to write another 'Percy,' but I beg now that you will first produce a specimen of *all* the various manners in which you can shine; for, since you are as modest as if your issue were illegitimate, I don't know but, like some females really in fault, you would stifle some of your pretty infants, rather than be detected and blush.

In the mean time, I beseech you not only to print your Specimen of the language that is to be in fashion, but have it entered at Stationers' Hall; or depend upon it, if ever a copy falls into the hands of a fine gentleman yet unborn, who shall be able both to read and write, he will adopt your letter for his own, and the Galimatias will give the ton to the Court, as Euphues did near two hundred years ago; and then you will have corrupted our language instead of defending it: and surely it is not *your* interest, Madam, to have pure English grow obsolete.

If you do not promise to grant my request, I will show your letter everywhere to those that are worthy of seeing it; that is, indeed, in very few places; for you *shall* have the honour of it. It is one of those compositions that prove themselves standards, by begetting imitations; and if the genuine parent is unknown, it will be ascribed to everybody that is supposed (in his own set) to have more wit than the rest of the world. I should be diverted, I own, to hear it faintly disavowed by some who would wish to pass for its authors: but still there is more pleasure in doing justice to merit, than in drawing vain pretensions into a scrape; and therefore I think you and I had better be honest and acknowledge it, though to you (for I am out of

on whose fidelity she reposed herself; she is, therefore, fallen into devotion, goes no more to spectacles, and play is detested at her house. Though she affects a mortal serious, I observed that her eyes were of intelligence with those of Sir James, near whom I had taken care to plant myself, though this is always a sacrifice which costs. Sir James is a great sayer of nothings; it is a spoilt mind, full of fatuity and pretension: his conversation is a tissue of impertinences, and the bad tone which reigns at present has put the last hand to his defects. He makes but little care of his word; but, as he lends himself to whatever is proposed of amusing, the women all throw themselves at his head. Adieu!"—Berry.

the question, but as evidence) it will be painful; for though the proverb says, "Tell truth and shame the devil," I believe he is never half so much confounded as a certain amiable young gentlewoman, who is discovered to have more taste and abilities than she ever ventured to ascribe to herself even in the most private dialogues with her own heart, especially when that native friend is so pure as to have no occasion to make allowances even for self-love. For my part, I am most seriously obliged to you, Madam, for so agreeable and kind a communication.

2347. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, April 8, 1785.

Your letter of March 15th, written by your own hand, came most welcome to me yesterday; for your nephew, who, I trust, is now with you, received one written by your servant just before he set out for Florence. . As it mentioned a return of your bleeding, it alarmed me, for *that* is no gouty symptom; but, as you again write, I flatter myself the discharge will be a remedy instead of a disorder. *My* gout is gone, but has left a vicegerent more persecuting than itself; I mean, the rheumatism. In short, you must not talk of age to me, who am as much broken as if I was an hundred. General Oglethorpe, who sometimes visits me, and who is ninety-five, has the activity of youth when compared with me. His eyes, ears, articulation, limbs, and memory would suit a boy, if a boy could recollect a century backwards. His teeth are gone; he is a shadow, and a wrinkled one; but his spirits and his spirit are in full bloom: two years and a half ago, he challenged a neighbouring gentleman for trespassing on his manor. *I* could carry a cannon as easily as let off a pistol. There is indeed a circumstance that makes me think myself an antediluvian: I have literally seen *seven* descents in one family. I do not believe Oglethorpe[1] can boast of recollecting a longer genealogy. In short, I was schoolfellow of the two last Earls of Waldegrave, and used to go to play with them in the holidays when I was about twelve years old. They lived with their grandmother, natural daughter of James II. One evening while I was there, came in her mother, Mrs. Godfrey,[2] that King's mistress—ancient, in truth,

[1] The old General, made memorable by Pope and Boswell. He was twenty-nine years older than Walpole.—Cunningham.

[2] Mrs. Godfrey was sister of John Duke of Marlborough, and by King James was mother of the Duke of Berwick and the first Lady Waldegrave; she afterwards

and so superannuated that she scarce seemed to know where she was. I saw her another time in her chair in St. James's Park, and have a perfect idea of her face, which was pale, round, and sleek. Begin with her; then count her daughter, Lady Waldegrave; then the latter's son, the Ambassador; his daughter, Lady Harriot Beard;[1] her daughter, the present Dowager Countess of Powis; and her daughter, Lady Clive—there are six: and the last now lies in of a son, and might have done so six or seven years ago, had she married at fourteen. When one has beheld such a pedigree, one *may* say, "And yet I am *but* sixty-seven!" I don't know whether it is not another patriarchal characteristic to tell you, that my great-niece, Mrs. Fitzroy,[2] is brought to bed of the fifty-sixth of my nephews and nieces, and the present Lady Waldegrave is in a fair way of adding another to the catalogue.

I am not surprised that Mozzi finds there is some difference between being the gallant, when young, of an old woman—and the husband, when elderly, of a girl: methinks, he might have concluded so without making the experiment. Mr. Duane has, I believe, left his collection to his nephew, and money enough to preserve it;[3] and the man is a lawyer too, *so* not likely to be ruined: therefore, Mozzi's present, which is handsome, will be welcome.

Your Lord Cowper and his Knighthood of St. Hubert is peddling lunacy. I find that our madmen, though they do not come to their senses abroad, degenerate by transplantation. Garters and orders are simple things in themselves, but succedaneums to them are quite contemptible. An English Earl stooping to be a Knight of St. Hubert is as if a tiger should be proud of being admitted into some order among cats! I think he had better have bought one of the Pope's hats; and then, at least, he would have been *papable*. I literally remember a mad foreigner at Paris (I forget of what country), who had a rage of universal knighthood, and used to appear at the theatres with a different coloured ribbon every night. The Government forbad his being a Knight of the St. Esprit, but left all the

married Colonel Godfrey, by whom she had Lady Falmouth and Mrs. Dunch. See an account of Mrs. Godfrey in the 'Mémoires de Grammont.'—WALPOLE.

[1] Henrietta, only daughter of James, first Earl of Waldegrave, was married to Lord Edward Herbert, brother of the last Marquis of Powis, by whom she had an only daughter, Barbara, first Countess of Powis.—WALPOLE.

[2] Laura Keppel.—WALPOLE.

[3] Most of it, however, consisting of pictures, drawings by Hussey, and antiques, were sold by auction. His gold antique medals Mr. Duane had sold himself to Dr. Hunter.—WALPOLE.

other stripes in Europe's rainbow to his option. I have seen him Companion of the Garter, Bath, and Thistle by turns.

I have no news to send to you or your nephew. The House of Commons could not adjourn for Easter, as for ten days they could not get a House to choose a committee on the Buckinghamshire Petition; so, the Speaker and two clerks were forced to go and sit every day in empty walls: your nephew must explain this paragraph to you, as it would be too long for a letter. A committee is chosen at last, but nothing is advanced. The motion of Reform of Parliament is deferred till next week. The Irish business hangs off too; and the House sits now till midnight, hearing counsel from Manchester against some of the late taxes. The east wind lasts too, so that in every respect it looks like the beginning of winter; and one so long neither Oglethorpe nor I remember. The sight of your nephew, I hope, has revived you; it is more than I can say that my fifty-six have effected for me.

2348. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

May 7, 1785.

As I have received a letter from yourself since your nephew set out, and none from him, I flatter myself that he found you well. I have had nothing to tell you worth writing; and, though I begin a letter from my usual regularity, I know not how it will get on, nor whether I shall be able to despatch it without more ballast. I know nothing but what all Europe knows, that there is a general drought and no grass. Of conversation, the chief topic is air-balloons. A French girl, daughter of a dancer, has made a voyage into the clouds, and nobody has yet broken a neck; so, neither good nor harm has hitherto been produced by these aerial enterprises. Neither politics nor fashion have furnished any novelties; so that, if I continue my monthly tribute, you must be content with its being of no more value than a peppercorn.

I am inclined to wish that Mrs. Damer would make you another visit. She is very delicate, and often out of order; and certainly was better for her Italian journey. She is engaged on an extraordinary work. There is just built a new bridge of stone over the Thames at Henley, which is close to Park-place. Mrs. Damer offered to make two gigantic masks of the Thame and Isis, for the

key-stones, and actually modelled them: *and a statuary was to execute them.* I said, "Oh! it will be imagined that you had little hand in them: you must perform them yourself." She consented. The 'Thame' is an old marine god, is finished, and put up; and, they say, has a prodigious effect. She is now at work on the 'Isis;' a most beautiful nymph's face, simple as the antique, but quite a new beauty. The idea was taken from Mrs. Freeman, of Fawley Court, a neighbour of General Conway. The key-stones of a county bridge carved by a young lady is an unparalleled curiosity! The originals in terra-cotta are now exhibiting at the Royal Academy; with a model of the same material of two kittens, by her too. She has a singular talent for catching the characters of animals. I have two Dogs sleeping, by her, (which she has since executed in marble for her brother,[1] the Duke of Richmond,) that are perfection. We have besides a young statuary, one Proctor, who is marvellous. He has gained the prizes in drawing, painting, and sculpture; and now exhibits a model in terra-cotta of 'Ixion,' less than life, which is a prodigy of anatomy, with all the freedom of nature. Miss Boyle,[2] a grand-daughter of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and a Miss Ogle, scholar of Mrs. Damer, model admirably too, and the first paints in oil. My brother, Sir Edward, said, that we have so many miracles in painting and music, that they cease to be any miracles at all. I confess, in the former I see few that attain the degree of doctor; of the others I am no judge.

There has been an enormous fire in Southwark, which has destroyed some acres of buildings and some vessels. It happened amongst magazines of turpentine, pitch, tar, and hemp; and has besides consumed to the value of an hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling of tea, which the East India Company had just purchased at Ostend to anticipate the smugglers. One must be mighty prone to compassion before one can feel for the Company, and must quite forget their atrocious deeds in India. My bowels shall be sent thither, (as those of our ancestors used to be to the Holy Land,) sooner than to Leadenhall Street.

Friday, 13th.

As I heard that the great question of Ireland was to be decided

[1] Charles, third Duke of Richmond, married Lady Mary Bruce, daughter of Lady Aylesbury, and half-sister to Mrs. Damer.—WALPOLE.

[2] Charlotte, second daughter of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, married Captain Walsingham Boyle, brother of the Earl of Shannon.—WALPOLE.

yesterday, and it being of no consequence when my letter set out, I detained it till it could have more dignity. I can barely now tell you the sum total, none of the particulars; for I have seen no Member of the House of Commons. The business is not finished, for the House was only in a committee: yet you may look upon it as determined; for Mr. Pitt had so great a majority to favour his propositions, that there is no doubt but they will pass triumphantly. The committee sat *till past eight this morning;* the numbers were, 281 for the Court, 155 for the Opposition. The completion of that affair, and of the taxes, which were proposed last Monday, will probably conclude the session; and, earthly business being adjusted, all the world will be at leisure to travel the air—not that terrestrial matters have interrupted balloons. Mr. Windham, the Member for Norwich, who was with you not long ago, has made a voyage into the clouds, and was in danger of falling to *earth*, and being *shipwrecked.*

Yesterday sevennight, as I was coming down stairs at Strawberry, to my chaise, my housekeeper told me that if I would go into the garden I might see a balloon; so I did, and so high, that though the sun shone, I could scarce discern it, and not bigger than my snuff-box. It had set out privately from Moulsey, in my neighbourhood, and went higher than any airgonaut had yet reached. But Mr. Windham, and Sadler his pilot, were near meeting the fate of Icarus; and though they did land safely, their bladder-vessel flew away again, and may be drowned in the moon for what we know! Three more balloons sail to-day; in short, we shall have a prodigious navy in the air, and then what signifies having lost the empire of the ocean?

2349. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

May 29, 1785.

Pleased as I was by hearing from your nephew, I am much more delighted, my dear Sir, to see *your* hand again. Yet I must chide you for writing so much, though at intervals, when you are weak and in bed. Your nephew told me your cough was troublesome; but I hope the warm weather will quite remove it. Never was so trying a winter: everybody has suffered but the physicians and apothecaries. We are still wanting rain, and are treated like Egyptians by insects.

You have acted like yourself, and the younger Sir Horace has acted like the elder, about Miss Lucy's[1] marriage. I do not know the *sposo*, but am contented with your account of him, and approve of his *name*. It is quite right not to oppose the inclinations of the young when there are no very striking or disgraceful objections. As to great estates and titles, what securities are they? Half our nobility are undone, and every day going into exile, from their own extravagance.

I saw with concern in the newspapers, two days ago, that their Neapolitan Majesties were visiting your Florentine Arch-Graces, and I dreaded their harassing you and putting you to expense: but your indisposition must give you a dispensation, and is even lightened to me by its saving you fatigue. I have no objection to their playing at Naumachias. It were well if sovereigns would be content with mock fights, and not sport with the lives of their subjects. The battle of the Bridge at Pisa is more glorious than invading the Scheldt. Two days ago there was a report of the *Dauphin's* death, and was said to come from Lord Sydney, Secretary of State. He was asked, if true? He replied, "I said, Lord *Godolphin*." So he is, and has given four thousand pounds a year to Lord Francis Osborne, second son of the other Secretary of State, Lord Carmarthen,[2] who himself inherits three thousand a year more.

I am barren of other news. The House of Commons sits, on taxes and the Irish propositions, but is thinly attended. I shall settle at Strawberry in about a week; but cannot have less to tell you than I have at present. Your nephew, I hope, will stay with you till you are quite recovered. What a nephew! I cannot boast of such an one in my extensive nepotism; and yet I have a few very good. An adopted one, Lord Waldegrave,[3] is excellent. Most of my nieces are unexceptionable. That is a great deal to say in an age not rigorous, and of ample license. I wonder our women are not much worse; for our newspapers are so indiscriminately scurrilous, to the great joy of devout old women, that pretty young women might be hardened, and trust to not being worse treated than many who are blameless. I have no patience with hags who

[1] James Mann, only son of Edward Louisa Mann, eldest brother of Sir Horace Mann, sen., was going to be married to Lucy, eldest daughter of Sir Horace, jun.—WALPOLE.

[2] Francis, only son of the Duke of Leeds, by Lady Mary Godolphin.—WALPOLE.

[3] George, fourth Earl of Waldegrave, married to his cousin, Lady Laura Waldegrave, daughter of the Duchess of Gloucester.—WALPOLE.

have no temptations, and think that frequent church-going authorises them to spread scandal from Sunday noon to next Sunday morning. There is not so noxious an animal as an ugly old harridan, who thinks herself religious the moment she becomes a disagreeable object; though she chooses to forget that Charity is preferable to Faith and Hope, or interprets Charity to mean nothing but giving alms. They have more occasion to carry a pocket-glass than a handsome woman—to put them in mind of their own death's heads.

I said, at the beginning of my letter, that I rejoiced to see your handwriting; yet I beg you not to give me that treat often. A line from your nephew, if it tells me you mend, will content me. I have frequently written to you by proxy; and, in truth, my letters require nor deserve answers. I have so much abandoned a world that is too juvenile for me, and have so few connections with it left, that my correspondence can have neither novelty nor spirit in it; and therefore, except to you, I scarce write a letter of ten lines in a month, and seldom but on business, of which too I have very little. A few antiquaries and virtuosos now and then consult me, because my oracle, from its ancientry, is become respected; but my devotees ask me simple questions, and in my responses I generally plead ignorance, and often with truth. My reading or writing has seldom had any object but my own amusement; and, having given over the trade, I had rather my customers went to another shop. The profession of author is trifling; but, when any *charlatanerie* is superadded, it is a contemptible one. To puff one's self is to be a mountebank, and swallowing wind as well as vending it.

I do not answer your nephew's letter in form; for formal it would be when you see I have so little to say, except to thank him for it, and for his most amiable tenderness and care of you. Nay, writing to one is writing to both: one loves two Sir Horaces as one: your hearts are as much the same as your names, and to write to you separately would be making a distinction in your unity. I am glad the cousins are to be one too. Adieu! I long to hear that you do not lie in bed but at night.

2350. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Berkeley Square, June 7, 1785.

Though you had declared yourself on the wing, Madam, you took your flight before I was aware, or I should have attempted to make

you a parting bow. People, who *have* paid their bills, are not apt to fly from town so rapidly. You have time to cool, indeed, perhaps not to dry yourselves, for June, that is not often in debt for rain, seems likely to discharge all his arrears. I question, however, whether a deluge will replace the leaves before the midsummer shoots: the tops of all my elms are as naked as in the first days of November; chaffers and nabobs, I mean caterpillars, have stripped them stark.

Mr. B. wrote, I conclude, when he was mad or drunk, probably the latter, for he seems to have had sober intervals enough to flatter every man who is or may be a Minister; his advertisement is of a piece with Miss Bellamy's.

The poor milkwoman's[1] poetry is published, and the charity, I imagine, equal whether by subscribing or buying the book. She seems to have a conscious dignity of mind, which I like better than her verses, and which is a greater rarity than middling poets or even than middling poetesses; I am a little sick of the Hayleys and Miss Sewards, who are like common milkwomen who borrow tankards and flowers of all their acquaintance for Mayday.

You tell me, Madam, that you only wrote to receive a letter; you do receive only your own letter back again, paragraph by paragraph. In truth I am superannuated, and know nothing, do nothing, am fit for nothing. I have been three days alone at Strawberry, and nowhere else but to dine at Gunnersbury last Friday, with the Conways, Harcourts, Mount-Edgcumbes, and Mrs. Howe. I expected that Lady Harcourt would every now and then say *your Majesty* instead of *your Royal Highness*. My Lord, too, is quite Count Castiglione, the perfect courtier. General Conway, who never remembers what anybody is or was, asked him, on speaking of Handel's music at Westminster Abbey, whether his Lordship had been in waiting! concluding he was a lord of the bedchamber.

This is all my journal contains, Madam; but what better can you expect from a Strulbrug? and one so insipid as to be content with being so? Nay, it is not an unpleasant state. Having outlived all one's passions and pursuits, and not having acquired avarice in lieu, one sits down tranquilly like an old sailor that has been in many storms, and sees the crowd bustling and jostling, or playing the fool, and feels the comfort of idleness and indifference, and the holiday luxury of having nothing to do. Don't you think the retired tradesman, whose journal is in 'The Spectator,' was a happy being? He

[1] Anne Yearsley.—CUNNINGHAM.

played with his cat, and strolled to Mother Redcap's, if the weather was fair, and had no uneasiness, but when his friend the politician (I forget his name) prognosticated war. There I am happier: I am past and below political apprehensions, and have so little time left, that the events of all futurity might as well disturb my imagination, as, perhaps, the next that are to happen. Even returns of pain, of which I have suffered so much, have little terror for me: I cannot feel a quarter of what I have felt, I mean in point of duration; and should they be violent, I have not strength to struggle with them. But I beg your pardon, Madam, though I can but smile with thinking how you will be disappointed on receiving, instead of a letter, the reflections of a Strulbrug on his own inanity. When Swift drew the character, he did not know it. Poor man! the turbulence of his own temper, and the apprehensions of his own decay, made him conceive it as a miserable condition: on the contrary, it is almost a gay one, when one can be sensible of it, and of all its enjoyments. I would tell you more of it, Madam, if it were capable of any variety; but as its uniformity is one of its felicities, you people of the world who have no taste for sameness, would not be diverted with the particulars. To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow—all alike. Tonton is as principal an actor as the tradesman's cat; but he has more vivacity, though he is not mad, as your Ladyship apprehended, when he bit Lord Ossory's finger; indeed, he can bite but little more than your obedient servant, his master.

2351. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 20, 1785.

I GIVE your Ladyship a thousand thanks for the crown of laurel you sent me: I tried it on immediately; but it certainly was never made for me; it was a vast deal too big, and did not fit me at all; it must have been designed for one of double my size. Besides, as I never wear so much as a hat, it would make my head ache—and then, too, as nobody in the village has worn a sprig of laurel since Mr. Pope's death, good Lord! how my neighbours would stare, if I should appear with a chaplet, to which I have no more title than Lord de Ferrers to the Earldom of Leicester. I will not be such a bear as to send back your Ladyship's favour: but if you would give me leave to present it to poor Mr. Hayley, or Mr. Cumberland, who ruin themselves in new laurels every day, it would make them as

happy as princes; and I dare answer that either of them would write an ode upon you, not quite so good perhaps, yet within a hundred thousand degrees as excellent as Major Scott's, and at least better than Mr. Warton's. However, though I am no poet, yet I don't know what I may come to, if I live. I have just written the life of a young lady in verse; in which, perhaps, I have too much affected brevity, though had I chosen to spin it out by a number of proper names, more falsehoods, and a tolerable quantity of anachronisms, there was matter enough to have furnished as many volumes as Miss Bellamy's 'Memoirs.' Mine I have comprised in these four lines:—

Patty was a pretty maid;
Patty was of men afraid;
Patty grew her fears to lose,
And grew so brave, she lost her nose.

As the world is now so overstocked with anecdotes, I don't know whether it will not be advisable for future English biographers to aim at my conciseness, and confine themselves to quatrains. Dr. Johnson's history, though he is going to have as many lives as a cat, might be reduced to four lines; but I shall wait, to extract the quintessence, till Sir John Hawkins, Madame Piozzi, and Mr. Boswell have produced their quartos. *Apropos,* Madam, t'other night I was sitting with Mrs. Vesey; there was very little light; arrived Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a person whom I took for Mr. Boswell. I sewed up my mouth, and, though he addressed me two or three times, I answered nothing but yes or no. Just as he was going away, I found out that it was Mr. Richard Burke, and endeavoured to repair my causticity. I am not quite in charity with Sir Joshua; he desired to come and see my marvellous Henry VII.; when he saw it, he said, "It is in the old hard Flemish manner." For hard, it is so bold, that it is one of the great reasons for doubting its antiquity; and for Flemish, there is nothing Flemish in it, except a *chiaro scuro,* as masterly as Rubens's; but it is not surprising that Sir Joshua should dislike colouring that has lasted so long!

I went last week to see a new piece, by O'Keeffe, my favourite author, next to Major Scott. Harry Fox was in the box. I asked him if he had ever seen 'The Agreeable Surprise;' he said, No; I cried it up to the heavens. He was much surprised at 'The Beggar on Horseback,' and asked me if 'The Beggar on Horseback' was like 'The Agreeable Surprise.' The new piece is very low, to be sure, and yet it diverted me; but you know I like extremes, and

next to perfect wit, perfect nonsense, when it is original. A sort of folly I do not admire is air balloons; but I believe their reign is over. They say, Monsieur Pilatrier and another man have been burnt to cinders, and Mr. Sadler has not been heard of yet.

The old, mad, drunken Duke of Norfolk is going to be married again to a Miss Eld, who is forty years old and a Protestant.

Tuesday.

I could not finish my letter yesterday, for Lord Sandwich, who was to breakfast with me, arrived sooner than I expected. He brought Mr. Noble with him, the author of the 'History of the Cromwells,' and Mr. Selwyn came to dinner with us, and the latter stayed all night. Lord Sandwich has taken the patronage of Mr. Noble, (as Hinchinbrook was the residence of Oliver,) and the second edition will be much more accurate and curious than the first. I could but look with admiration at the Earl, who at our age can enter so warmly into any pursuits and find them amusing! It is pleasant to have such spirits, that, after going through such busy political scenes, he can be diverted with carrying a white wand at Handel's jubilee, and for two years together! Do you think Lord Lansdowne would be content with being master of the ceremonies at Bath? The papers tell a different story from mine of poor Pilatrier's exit. I hope it will prevent Mr. Fitzpatrick[1] from such an expedition. It would be silly to break one's neck in going no whither; don't you think so, Madam?

2352. TO JOHN PINKERTON, ESQ.

June 22, 1785.

Since I received your book,[2] Sir, I scarce ceased from reading till I had finished it; so admirable I found it, and so full of good sense, brightly delivered. Nay, I am pleased with myself, too, for having formed the same opinions with you on several points, in which we do not agree with the generality of men. On some topics, I confess frankly, I do not concur with you: considering how many you have touched, it would be wonderful if we agreed on all, or I should not

[1] Colonel Fitzpatrick went up alone in a balloon, from Oxford; he had engaged to go with Mr. Sadler, but just at the time of starting, it was found to be unfit for two. —R. Vernon Smith.

[2] "His 'Letters on Literature,' published this year under the name of Heron. The book alluded to was written in early youth, and has many juvenile crude ideas, long since abandoned by its author." *Pinkerton, (note to Letter)* in *Walpoliana*, vol. i. p. 81.—Cunningham.

be sincere if I said I did. There are others on which I have formed no opinion; for I should give myself an impertinent air, with no truth, if I pretended to have any knowledge of many subjects, of which, young as you are, you seem to have made yourself master. Indeed, I have gone deeply into nothing, and therefore shall not discuss those heads on which we differ most; as probably I should not defend my own opinions well. There is but one part of your work to which I will venture any objection, though you have considered it much, and I little, very little indeed, with regard to your proposal, which to me is but two days old: I mean your plan for the improvement of our language, which I allow has some defects, and which wants correction in several particulars. The specific amendment which you propose, and to which I object, is the addition of *a's* and *o's* to our terminations. To change *s* for *a* in the plural number of our substantives and adjectives, would be so violent an alteration, that I believe neither the power of Power nor the power of Genius would be able to effect it. In most cases I am convinced that very strong innovations are more likely to make impression than small and almost imperceptible differences, as in religion, medicine, politics, &c.; but I do not think that language can be treated in the same manner, especially in a refined age.

When a nation first emerges from barbarism, two or three masterly writers may operate wonders; and the fewer the number of writers, as the number is small at such a period, the more absolute is their authority. But when a country has been polishing itself for two or three centuries, and when, consequently, authors are innumerable, the most super-eminent genius (or whoever is esteemed so, though without foundation) possesses very limited empire, and is far from meeting implicit obedience. Every petty writer will contest very novel institutions: every inch of change in any language will be disputed; and the language will remain as it was, longer than the tribunal which should dictate very heterogeneous alterations. With regard to adding *a* or *o* to final consonants, consider, Sir, should the usage be adopted, what havoc it would make! All our poetry would be defective in metre, or would become at once as obsolete as Chaucer; and could we promise ourselves, that, though we should acquire better harmony and more rhymes, we should have a new crop of poets, to replace Milton, Dryden, Gray, and, I am sorry you will not allow me to add, Pope! You might enjoin our prose to be reformed, as you have done by the 'Spectator' in your thirty-fourth Letter; but try Dryden's 'Ode' by your new institution.

I beg your pardon for these trivial observations: I assure you I could write a letter ten times as long, if I were to specify all I like in your work. I more than like most of it; and I am charmed with your glorious love of liberty, and your other humane and noble sentiments. Your book I shall with great pleasure send to Mr. Colman: may I tell him, without naming you, that it is written by the author of the comedy I offered to him? He must be struck with your very handsome and generous conduct in printing your encomiums on him, after his rejecting your piece. It is as great as uncommon, and gives me as good an opinion of your heart, Sir, as your book does of your great sense. Both assure me that you will not take ill the liberty I have used in expressing my doubts on your plan for amending our language, or for any I may use in dissenting from a few other sentiments in your work; as I shall in what I think your too low opinion of some of the French writers, of your preferring Lady Mary Wortley to Madame de Sévigné, and of your esteeming Mr. Hume a man of deeper and more solid understanding than Mr. Gray. In the two last articles it is impossible to think more differently than we do. In Lady Mary's 'Letters,' which I never could read but once, I discovered no merit of any sort; yet I have seen others by her (unpublished) that have a good deal of wit; and for Mr. Hume, give me leave to say that I think your opinion, "that he might have ruled a state," ought to be qualified a little; as in the very next page you say, his 'History' is "a mere apology for prerogative," and a very weak one. If he could have ruled a state, one must presume, at best, that he would have been an able tyrant; and yet I should suspect that a man, who, sitting coolly in his chamber, could forge but a weak apology for the prerogative, would not have exercised it very wisely. I knew personally and well both Mr. Hume and Mr. Gray, and thought there was no degree of comparison between their understandings; and, in fact, Mr. Hume's writings were so superior to his conversation, that I frequently said he understood nothing till he had written upon it. What you say, Sir, of the discord in his 'History' from his love of prerogative and hatred of churchmen, flatters me much; as I have taken notice of that very unnatural discord in a piece I printed some years ago, but did not publish, and which I will show to you when I have the pleasure of seeing you here; a satisfaction I shall be glad to taste, whenever you will let me know you are at leisure after the beginning of next week. I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

2353. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Berkeley Square, June 24, 1785.

THOUGH I beg not to urge you to repeat those proofs too often, I must feel great satisfaction from every letter I receive from you under your own hand, when I know your health is not yet quite re-established. I should be content, rationally content, that is enjoining myself to be content, with hearing of you from your nephew; but your own characters must be more comfortable. However, the more you mend, write the less: I am no longer in fear about you, and consequently my patience will allow of longer intervals now I know you are recovering, which *we* cannot do with the impetuosity of youth. But then Italian summers are a good succedaneum, and, I hope, will be more efficacious than our north-easterly winds. Even with these, *I* am arrived at being as well as I was before my last fit, and I beg you will pledge me.

Thank you for your 'Gazette,' and account of *spectacles*.[1] Florence is a charming theatre for such festivals: those Italy is giving to the Neapolitan Majesties put one in mind of the times when the Medici, the Farneses, Gonzagas, &c., banquetted each other's Highness reciprocally. I am glad the *holy* Roman Emperor is at leisure to visit *principini*, *palazzi*, and *giardini*, instead of besieging *fortezze*, like a *wicked* overgrown *principone*. I am glad, too, that the *wicked holy* Roman Father[2] is disappointed of his iniquitous plunder. Rome is come to its dregs again when the Pontifex Maximus is sunk into an *heredipeta*—one of the vile vocations that marked the *fæces Romuli*.

Our *Senate* is still sitting, and likely to sit, on the Irish propositions, which gravel both countries. Mr. Grattan, the phenomenon of the other side of the Channel, has set his face against Mr. Pitt's altered plan. This is all I know of the matter. I am very little in town now, and Twickenham is one of the most unpolitical villages in the island.[3]

[1] Relations of the entertainments made for the king and queen of Naples.—WALPOLE.

[2] Pope Pius VI. had wheedled a rich old abbé to make him heir; but the family contested the will and set it aside.—WALPOLE.

[3] It was not so during the last few years of Pope's life. Compare vol. vii. p. 374.—CUNNINGHAM.

You will find by our and the French Gazettes, that *air-navigation* has received a great blow; the first *air*gonaut, poor Pilatrier, and his companions, having broken their necks. He had the Croix de St. Louis in his pocket, and was to have put it on the moment he should have crossed the Channel and landed in England. I have long thought that France has conceived hopes of annihilating our Pyrenees by these flying squadrons. Here they have been turned into a mere job for getting money from gaping fools. One of our adventurers, named Sadler, has been missing, and is supposed lost in the German Ocean.

Prince William [William IV.], the King's third son, has been in England, and is sailed for the Mediterranean, I think; so, I suppose, will visit Leghorn. It is pity he will arrive too late for your shows, which would be proper for his age.

On reading over your Florentine Gazette, I observed that the Great-Duke has a manufacture of porcelain. If any of it is sold, I should be glad if your nephew would bring me a single bit—a cup, or other trifle, as a sample. I remember that, ages ago, there was a manufacture at Florence belonging to Marquis Ginori, of which I wished for a piece, but could not procure one: the Grand-Ducal may be more attainable. I have a closet furnished with specimens of porcelain of various countries, besides a good deal of Fayence or Raphael ware, and some pieces with the arms of Medici—but am not I an old simpleton to be wanting play-things still?—and how like is one's last cradle to one's first! Adieu!

28*th.*

P.S. Notwithstanding Pilatrier's miscarriage, Balloonation holds up its head. Colonel Fitzpatrick, Lord Ossory's brother, has ascended in one from Oxford, and was alone. Sadler, whom I thought lost, is come to light again, and was to have been of the voyage; but the vessel not being potent enough for two, the Colonel went alone, had a brush with a high hill in his descent, but landed safe about fifteen miles from the University. How Posterity will laugh at us, one way or other! If half a dozen break their necks, and Balloonism is exploded, we shall be called fools for having imagined it could be brought to use: if it should be turned to account, we shall be ridiculed for having doubted.

2354. TO JOHN PINKERTON, ESQ.

June 26, 1785.

I HAVE sent your book to Mr. Colman, Sir, and must desire you in return to offer my grateful thanks to Mr. Knight, who has done me an honour, to which I do not know how I am entitled, by the present of his poetry, which is very classic, and beautiful, and tender, and of chaste simplicity.

To *your* book, Sir, I am much obliged on many accounts; particularly for having recalled my mind to subjects of delight, to which it was grown dulled by age and indolence. In consequence of your reclaiming it, I asked myself whence you feel so much disregard for certain authors whose fame is established: you have assigned good reasons for withholding your approbation from some, on the plea of their being imitators: it was natural, then, to ask myself again, whence they had obtained so much celebrity. I think I have discovered a cause, which I do not remember to have seen noted; and *that* cause I suspect to have been, that certain of those authors possessed grace:—do not take me for a disciple of Lord Chesterfield, nor imagine that I mean to erect grace into a capital ingredient of writing, but I do believe that it is a perfume that will preserve from putrefaction, and is distinct even from style, which regards expression. *Grace*, I think, belongs to *manner*. It is from the charm of grace that I believe some authors, not in your favour, obtained part of their renown; Virgil, in particular: and yet I am far from disagreeing with you on his subject in general. There is such a dearth of invention in the Æneid, (and when he did invent, it was often so foolishly,) so little good sense, so little variety, and so little power over the passions, that I have frequently said, from contempt for his matter, and from the charm of his harmony, that I believe I should like his poem better, if I was to hear it repeated, and did not understand Latin. On the other hand, he has more than harmony: whatever he utters is said gracefully, and he ennobles his images, especially in the Georgics; or, at least, it is more sensible there, from the humility of the subject. A Roman farmer might not understand his diction in agriculture; but he made a Roman courtier understand farming, the farming of that age, and could captivate a lord of Augustus's bedchamber, and tempt him to listen to themes of rusticity. On the contrary, Statius and Claudian, though talking of

war, would make a soldier despise them as bullies. That graceful manner of thinking in Virgil seems to me to be more than style, if I do not refine too much: and I admire, I confess, Mr. Addison's phrase, that Virgil "tossed about his dung with an air of majesty." A style may be excellent without grace: for instance, Dr. Swift's. Eloquence may bestow an immortal style, and one of more dignity; yet eloquence may want that ease, that genteel air that flows from or constitutes grace. Addison himself was master of that grace, even in his pieces of humour, and which do not owe their merit to style; and from that combined secret he excels all men that ever lived, but Shakspeare, in humour, by never dropping into an approach towards burlesque and buffoonery, when even his humour descended to characters that in other hands would have been vulgarly low. Is not it clear that Will Wimble was a gentleman, though he always lived at a distance from good company? Fielding had as much humour, perhaps, as Addison; but, having no idea of grace, is perpetually disgusting. His innkeepers and parsons are the grossest of their profession; and his gentlemen are awkward when they should be at their ease.

The Grecians had grace in everything; in poetry, in oratory, in statuary, in architecture, and probably, in music and painting. The Romans, it is true, were their imitators; but, having grace too, imparted it to their copies, which gave them a merit that almost raises them to the rank of originals. Horace's 'Odes' acquired their fame, no doubt, from the graces of his manner and purity of his style,—the chief praise of Tibullus and Propertius, who certainly cannot boast of more meaning than Horace's 'Odes.'

Waller, whom you proscribe, Sir, owed his reputation to the graces of his manner, though he frequently stumbled, and even fell flat; but a few of his smaller pieces are as graceful as possible: one might say that he excelled in painting ladies in enamel, but could not succeed in portraits in oil, large as life. Milton had such superior merit, that I will only say, that if his angels, his Satan, and his Adam have as much dignity as the Apollo Belvidere, his Eve has all the delicacy and graces of the Venus of Medicis; as his description of Eden has the colouring of Albano. Milton's tenderness imprints ideas as graceful as Guido's Madonnas: and the 'Allegro,' 'Penseroso,' and 'Comus' might be denominated from the three Graces; as the Italians gave similar titles to two or three of Petrarch's best sonnets.

Cowley, I think, would have had grace (for his mind was graceful)

if he had had any ear, or if his taste had not been vitiated by the pursuit of wit; which, when it does not offer itself naturally, degenerates into tinsel or pertness. Pertness is the mistaken affectation of grace, as pedantry produces erroneous dignity; the familiarity of the one, and the clumsiness of the other, distort or prevent grace. Nature, that furnishes samples of all qualities, and on the scale of gradation exhibits all possible shades, affords us types that are more apposite than words. The eagle is sublime, the lion majestic, the swan graceful, the monkey pert, the bear ridiculously awkward. I mention these as more expressive and comprehensive than I could make definitions of my meaning; but I will apply the swan only, under whose wings I will shelter an apology for Racine, whose pieces give me an idea of that bird. The colouring of the swan is pure; his attitudes are graceful; he never displeases you when sailing on his proper element. His feet may be ugly, his notes hissing, not musical, his walk not natural; he can soar, but it is with difficulty:—still, the impression the swan leaves is that of grace. So does Racine.

Boileau may be compared to the dog, whose sagacity is remarkable, as well as its fawning on its master, and its snarling at those it dislikes. If Boileau was too austere to admit the pliability of grace, he compensates by good sense and propriety. He is like (for I will drop animals) an upright magistrate, whom you respect, but whose justice and severity leave an awe that discourages familiarity. His copies of the ancients may be too servile: but, if a good translator deserves praise, Boileau deserves more. He certainly does not fall below his originals; and, considering at what period he wrote, has greater merit still. By his imitations he held out to his countrymen models of taste, and banished totally the bad taste of his predecessors. For his 'Lutrin,' replete with excellent poetry, wit, humour, and satire, he certainly was not obliged to the ancients. Excepting Horace, how little idea had either Greeks or Romans of wit and humour! Aristophanes and Lucian, compared with moderns, were, the one a blackguard, and the other a buffoon. In my eyes, the 'Lutrin,' the 'Dispensary,' and the 'Rape of the Lock,' are standards of grace and elegance, not to be paralleled by antiquity; and eternal reproaches to Voltaire, whose indelicacy in the 'Pucelle' degraded him as much, when compared with the three authors I have named, as his 'Henriade' leaves Virgil, and even Lucan, whom he more resembles, by far his superiors.

'The Dunciad' is blemished by the offensive images of the games;

but the poetry appears to me admirable; and, though the fourth book has obscurities, I prefer it to the three others: it has descriptions not surpassed by any poet that ever existed, and which surely a writer merely ingenious will never equal. The lines on Italy, on Venice, on Convents, have all the grace for which I contend as distinct from poetry, though united with the most beautiful; and the 'Rape of the Lock,' besides the originality of great part of the invention, is a standard of graceful writing.

In general, I believe that what I call grace, is denominated elegance; but by grace I mean something higher. I will explain myself by instances—Apollo is graceful, Mercury is elegant. Petrarch, perhaps, owed his whole merit to the harmony of his numbers and the graces of his style. They conceal his poverty of meaning and want of variety. His complaints, too, may have added an interest, which, had his passion been successful, and had expressed itself with equal sameness, would have made the number of his sonnets insupportable. Melancholy in poetry, I am inclined to think, contributes to grace, when it is not disgraced by pitiful lamentations, such as Ovid's and Cicero's in their banishments. We respect melancholy, because it imparts a similar affection, pity. A gay writer, who should only express satisfaction without variety, would soon be nauseous.

Madame de Sévigné shines both in grief and gaiety. There is too much of sorrow for her daughter's absence; yet it is always expressed by new terms, by new images, and often by wit, whose tenderness has a melancholy air. When she forgets her concern, and returns to her natural disposition—gaiety, every paragraph has novelty: her allusions, her applications are the happiest possible. She has the art of making you acquainted with all her acquaintance, and attaches you even to the spots she inhabited. Her language is correct, though unstudied; and, when her mind is full of any great event, she interests you with the warmth of a dramatic writer, not with the chilling impartiality of an historian. Pray read her accounts of the death of Turenne, and of the arrival of King James in France, and tell me whether you do not know their persons as if you had lived at the time.

For my part, if you will allow me a word of digression, (not that I have written with any method,) I hate the cold impartiality recommended to Historians: "Si vis me flere, dolendum est primùm ipsi tibi:" but, that I may not wander again, nor tire, nor contradict you any more, I will finish now, and shall be glad if you will dine

at Strawberry Hill next Sunday, and take a bed there, when I will tell you how many more parts of your book have pleased me, than have startled my opinions, or, perhaps, prejudices. I have the honour to be, Sir, with regard, &c.

2355. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 30, 1785.

"Icarus Icariis nomina fecit aquis."

Thanks to the powers of the air that Mr. Fitzpatrick has not new-christened the Thame or the Isis! nor dyed the Saxon White Horse black! Why did he ascend from Oxford? He should have left the Laureate[1] to get another fall from the *White Horse*. Mr. Fitzpatrick had given ample proofs of his spirit before, and, therefore, I hope he will now lie on his arms.

As to me, Madam, if I gathered a chaplet and crowned myself, at least your Ladyship planted the tree of which I plucked a branch. You did not utter the words *crown of laurel;* but you did say I was *reposing under my own laurels*, therefore I may justly plead with our prime ancestor, that *the woman tempted me and I did eat*; yet I did not swallow a leaf—but no more of that.

I can make as just a defence on my omission of Lord Barrington, of which here is the simple narrative. As he was an obscure Presbyterian writer, I had never heard of him when I published my first edition. Being then told of him, I asked his son, the present lord, for a list of his works. His Lordship, conscious that his parent, who had been a great rogue, had better be forgotten, desired as a favour, that I would *not* repair the omission, and therefore I did not. His brother, the Bishop of Salisbury, who was not so discreet, and who did not like to lose the authorship out of the genealogy, inserted his father's life in the new 'Biographia,' [Kippis] and in grateful return for my *noli prosequi*, ascribed the punishment of his own father's knavery to an act of revenge in mine. In short, the late Lord Barrington was expelled the House of Commons for being concerned in a gross bubble called the *Harburgh Lottery;* and the Bishop pretends (which his father himself never did) that the expulsion was procured by Sir Robert Walpole, because Lord Barrington, who twice sold the Presbyterians to the Court, had been attached to Lord

[1] Thomas Warton. William Whitehead, his predecessor, died 14th April, 1785.—Cunningham.

Sunderland. Lord Barrington, in the next editions of the 'Royal and Noble Authors,' will find his proper place, though he did not in the first edition—nor in the pillory.[1] I beg you will send for a new book, called 'Letters on Literature,' by Robert Heron, Esq.[2] It is an extraordinary work, in which there is a variety of knowledge and a great mixture of parts. There are several things to which I do not at all agree; others much to my mind; but which will not be popular. I never heard of *Robert Heron* before, but he does not seem to design to remain in obscurity, nor averse to literary warfare, whence I conclude he is young; and you will see from every page, Madam, that he will not want antagonists.

I have been for two or three days in town, where I heard two Hessian French horns, who are reckoned super-eminent. They are as reasonable as March, the tooth-drawer; they ask *but* ten guineas for an evening. I heard, too, what diverted me more, an impertinence of Mr. Hastings when he was last in England. Lord Huntingdon, by way of acknowledging him, told him he believed they were related—"No, my Lord," said Hastings, "I am descended from Hastings, Earl of Pembroke," meaning that he was of the elder branch. Judge how the blood of Clarence boiled! "I thought," said the Earl, "that there were no descendants of that branch left but the Marchioness of Grey," and turned on his heel. I wish he had replied, "I thought *you* were only of the branch of green Hastings."

I am now settled on my hill, a melancholy widower; Lady Browne has left Twickenham. As she was my newsmonger, I shall know even less than I used to do. All this morning I have been busy in placing 'Henry VII.' in the State Bed-Chamber, and making a new arrangement of pictures. It is really a very royal chamber now and much improved. Besides the family of Henry VIII. over the chimney as before, and Queen Maintenon over one of the doors, there are Henry VII. and Catherine of Braganza on one side of the bed; Henry VIII. and Henriette Duchess of Orleans on the other. There will be a much prettier room soon at the other end of the village; Lady Di. is painting another with small pictures framed with wreaths of flowers

"—— Flowers worthy of Paradise!"

there is already a wreath of honeysuckles, surpassing her own lilacs,

[1] Lord Barrington has his "proper place" in vol. i. p. 543 of 'Walpole's Works.'—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] That is, John Pinkerton.—CUNNINGHAM.

and such as she only could paint and Milton describe; and there is a baby Bacchus so drunk! and so pretty! borne in triumph by bacchanalian Cupids. Twickenham does not vie with the pomps of Stowe, but, like the modest violet, *qui se cachoit sous l'herbe*, has its humble sweets.

2356. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Monday night, July 4, 1785.

I WRITE again so quickly, Madam, not to detain Mr. Fitzpatrick's letter, for which I give you many thanks, and which you must value as it is so very sensible and unaffected an account of his aerial jaunt, and deserves to be preserved in your Milesian archives;[1] for, whether aerostation becomes a professional art, or is given up with the prosecution of the Tower of Babel and other invasions on the coast of Heaven, an original letter under the hand of the first *air*gonauts will always be a precious curiosity.

I have just been reading a work by a new Noble Authoress, a princess of the blood of Clarence, and a lady deeply versed in the antiquities of the country where the great Brian Mac Gill Patrick was seated, as well as of the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Gauls, &c. It is the present Countess of Moira, whose letter to her son is in the new seventh volume of the 'Archæologia,' and gives an account of a skeleton and its habiliments lately discovered in the county of Down and barony of Linalearty.

Oh! but I have better news for you, Madam, if you have any patriotism as a citizen of this world and wish its longevity. Mr. Herschel has found out that our globe is a comely middle-aged personage, and has not so many wrinkles as seven stars, who are evidently our seniors. Nay, he has discovered that the Milky Way is not only a mob of stars, but that there is another dairy of them still farther off, whence, I conclude, comets are nothing but pails returning from milking, instead of balloons filled with inflammable air, which must by this time have made terrible havoc in such thickets of worlds, if at all dangerous; now I shall descend, as if out of a balloon, from the heavens to the milkwoman. It is no doubt extraordinary that the poor soul should write tolerably; but, when she can write tolerably, is not it extraordinary that a Miss

[1] I am sorry it is not; at least I cannot find it.—R. VERNON SMITH.

Seward should write no better? I am sick of these sweet singers, and advised that when poor Mrs. Yearsley shall have been set at her ease by the subscription, she should drive her cows from the foot of Parnassus and hum no more ditties. For Chatterton, he was a gigantic genius, and might have soared I know not whither In the poems, avowed for his, is a line, that Rowley nor all the monks in Christendom could or would have written, and which would startle them all for its depth of thought and comprehensive expression from a lad of eighteen—

"Reason, a thorn in Revelation's side!"

I will read no more of Rousseau; his Confessions disgusted me beyond any book I ever opened. His hen, the schoolmistress, Madame de Genlis, the newspapers say, is arrived in London. I nauseate her too; the eggs of education that both he and she laid, could not be hatched till the chickens would be ready to die of old age. I revere genius; I have a dear friendship for common sense; I have a partiality for professed nonsense; but I abhor extravagance, that is given for the quintessence of sense, and affectation that pretends to be philosophy. Good night, Madam!

P.S. Pray tell me where your new library is placed. The parson of Teddington[1] and his wife were robbed, at half-an-hour after nine last night, by three footpads, with pistols, at my back gate. My housekeeper heard the bustle from her room that is over the Holbein chamber. I was in the Library, but knew nothing of the matter till to-day. It is agreeable to have banditti at one's doors!

2357. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 9, 1785.

I AM sorry Lord Ossory has any Irish difficulties, great or small.

I made no commentary on General Oglethorpe's death, Madam, because his very long life was the great curiosity, and the moment he is dead the rarity is over; and, as he was but ninety-seven, he will not be a prodigy compared with those who reached to a century and a half. He is like many who make a noise in their own time from some singularity, which is forgotten, when it comes to be

[1] John Cosens, D.D., also a small poet,—died, 1791.—CUNNINGHAM.

registered with others of the same genius, but more extraordinary in their kind. How little will Dr. Johnson be remembered, when confounded with the mass of authors of his own calibre!

I said no more on the Duchess of Bedford's broken wrist, because I did not know of it. The Duchess of Montrose told me she was said to have broken her leg, but that it was not true; and that she had given a public breakfast the next day, but did not appear at it herself, so I concluded she had only miscarried of a broken leg; but ah! Madam, when old folks break their wrists by tottering out of their own houses, is not it a just reason for my not daring to think of clambering up ladders, to range books, at Ampthill, though I should have more pleasure in it than the Duchess could have at a ball at five in the morning. I could delight, too, in playing with Lady Anne's orrery, and I could prattle on the planet that rolled under your Ladyship's feet;[1] but when I am sensible of the lameness of my feet, why should I be more indulgent to my head? I talked nonsense enough on astronomy in my last, and I will not again violate a maxim that I have laid down to myself, and which I believe so true, that it ought to be repeated daily to old people, like Saladin's "Remember thou art mortal!" This is my maxim, "When a man's eyes, ears, or memory decay, he ought to conclude that his understanding decays, too, for the weaker it grows, the less likely he is to perceive it."

When you send for Mr. Heron's book, you may write too for the seventh volume of the 'Archæologia,' in which you will find a few pages amusing, amongst several that don't know their own meaning. I early translated the title of these volumes, *old women's logic*, and seldom do they contradict me—witness the first dissertation in the present, *cum multis aliis;* but there is a very sensible discourse, p. 303, on the religion of the Druids, in which the writer, unlike his companions, demolishes fantastic reverence for barbarians, instead of discovering arts and sciences amongst rude nations, who had nothing but labour and time to spare, and who put one in mind of Lord Abercorn's answer to the gentleman who complimented him on the growth of his trees, "They had nothing else to do." I have lately dipped into D'Ancarville's two volumes, in which he ascribes universal knowledge and invention to the Scythians, as Bryant did to the Lord knows whom; but with all my pertinacity in reading quartos, I could not wade through the tautology and impertinence

[1] Compare vol. iii. p. 406.—CUNNINGHAM.

of D'Ancarville's, though he has lately been here to draw a bronze I have of Ceres, with a bull in her lap; and because I have this ugly morsel, I suppose he will call me *the ingenious and learned*, as Mr. Daines Barrington does; and I had rather they would box my ears, for it is calling one a fool that has taken his degrees. Now I declare I have no more regard for the Phœnicians, Pelasgians, Vics, Egyptians, Edomites, Scythians, and Gentoos, than I have for Madame de Genlis. I read such books as I do Mrs. Bellamy's, and believe in them no more. The one nation worth studying was the Greeks. In the compass of two or three centuries half-a-dozen little towns, or rather one town, scarce bigger than Brentford, discovered the standard of poetry, eloquence, statuary, architecture, and perhaps of painting and music; and then *the learned* have the impertinence to tell one that the Grecians borrowed from the Egyptians, Tartars, Indians, &c. That is, they stole the genuine principles of all beauty and all taste from every idea of deformity and absurdity! The Apollo and the Venus from mummies and idols with four heads, more hands, and two legs, as immovable as oaks in an avenue! I concentre my admiration in the few centuries of Greece, and for that marvellous period in the Roman history, when five excellent princes, though possessed of absolute power, succeeded to one another, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. This is not learning: the learned are busied in inquiring how long the world has blundered without discovering what was worth knowing.

Sunday.

P.S. After writing my letter, I learnt that by the new arrangement of the post, it would only have lain in town, and could not depart the same night as usual. When I came from Lady Dysart's last night, I found on my table the annual Transactions *de l'Academie of Arts and Sciences*, in which the gold medal to our Lord is recorded; and his gardener's letter, which says he could not make Lombardy poplars grow in wet ground. The lawn beyond my flower-garden was a morass, that I was forced to have drained, yet before the drains were made, Lombardy poplars grew there astonishingly; and the first I ever saw in England General Conway planted at the foot of his mountain, close to the Thames, [at Henley] and in three years it was of an amazing height.

2358. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 23, 1785.

I AM very sorry to hear that the war of bad seasons, which has lasted eight months, has affected your Ladyship too. I never knew so much illness; but as our natural season, rain, is returned, I hope you will recover from your complaints. English consumptions are attributed to our insular damps, but I question whether justly. The air of the sea is an elixir, not a poison; and in the three sultry summers which preceded the three last, it is notorious that our fruits were uncommonly bad, as if they did not know how to behave in hot weather. Nay, it is certain, that in our camps there was scarce any sickness when the tents were swimming; whereas in those Italian summers the contrary was fact. I hope I shall not be contradicted by the experience of last night. Mrs. Keppel had, or rather was to have had, all London at her beautiful villa at Isleworth. Her Grace of Devonshire was to have been there,—ay, you may stare, Madam! and her Grace of Bedford too. The deluge in the morning, the debate in the House of Commons, qualms in the first Duchess, and I don't know what, certainly not *qualms* in the second, detained them, and no soul came from town but Lady Duncannon, Lady Beauchamp, the two Miss Vernons, the Boltons, the Norths, Lord William Russell, Charles Wyndham, Colonel Gardiner, and Mr. Aston, and none of these arrived till ten at night. Violins were ready, but could not play to no dancers; so at eleven the young people said it was a charming night, and went to paddle on the terrace over the river, while we ancients, to affect being very hot too, sat with all the windows in the bow open, and might as well have been in Greenland! Miss Vernon did not know her brother was set out.

You surprise me, Madam, by saying the newspapers mention my disappointment of seeing Madame de Genlis. How can such arrant trifles spread? It is very true, that as the hill would not go to see Madame de Genlis, she has come to see the hill. Ten days ago Mrs. Cosway sent me a note that *Madame* desired a ticket for Strawberry Hill. I thought I could not do less than offer her a breakfast, and named yesterday se'nnight. Then came a message that she must go to Oxford and take her Doctor's degree; and then another, that I should see her yesterday, when she did arrive with

Miss Wilkes and Pamela, whom she did not even present to me, and whom she has educated to be very like herself in the face. I told her I could not attribute the honour of her visit but to my late dear friend Madame du Deffand. It rained the whole time, and was dark as midnight, so that she could scarce distinguish a picture; but you will want an account of her, and not of what she saw or could not see. Her person is agreeable, and she seems to have been pretty. Her conversation is natural and reasonable, not *precieuse* and affected, and searching to be eloquent, as I had expected. I asked her if she had been pleased with Oxford, meaning the buildings, not the wretched oafs that inhabit it. She said she had had little time; that she had wished to learn their plan of education, which, as she said sensibly, she supposed was adapted to our Constitution. I could have told her that it is directly repugnant to our Constitution, and that nothing is taught there but drunkenness and prerogative, or, in their language, Church and King. I asked if it is true that the new edition of Voltaire's works is prohibited: she replied, severely,—and then condemned those who write against religion and government, which was a little unlucky before her friend *Miss Wilkes*. She stayed two hours, and returns to France to-day *to her duty*. I really do not know whether the Duc de Chartres is in England or not. She did lodge in his house in Portland-place; but at Paris, I think, has an hotel where she educates his daughters.

Mr. Horace Walpole (not myself) called on me yesterday morning, when no Will of the Duchess of Portland [Lord Oxford's daughter] had been found. He thinks the bulk of the collection will be sold, but that the Duke will reserve the principal curiosities: I hope so, for I should long for some of them, and am become too poor to afford them; besides that, it is ridiculous to treat one's self with playthings, when one's eyes are closing.

I hope the visit to Lady Ravensworth and fresh grass will restore your Ladyship's health and looks. I send this response to Ampthill, as you have given me no direction.

2359. TO SIR HORACE MANN

Berkeley Square, July 25, 1785.

Before I reply to the other parts of your letter of the 5th, which I have just received, I must tell you how rejoiced I am to hear of your having the gout in your knees and feet. Let me entreat you

to encourage and keep it there: indulge them in yards of flannel, and lie much in bed; never rise when they have any perspiration; they will cure your cough, and you cannot be too grateful to them. This effort shows the strength and excellence of your constitution, and will preserve you long: for my part, I had rather lie in bed than attend regal puppet-shows; and I always make the most of my gout, when it is to excuse my doing anything I don't like.

I love your nephew better than ever for his attention to you. Mr. Croft has given me a most excellent character of Mr. James,[1] who, I hope, will repay to your nephew his affection and care of you.

I have not the honour of being acquainted with Lady Hampden;[2] Mrs. Trevor[3] I do know, who is gentle and pleasing. Lady Hampden's mother, whom I see often at the Duchess of Montrose's, is very amiable, and a favourite of mine.

Though three millions sterling[4] from the plunder of convents is a plump bellyfull, I don't believe the Austrian Eagle will stop there, nor be satisfied with private property. No: I told you, I believe, when I read the new 'History of the Medici,' that Cæsar had set that work on foot as a preparative to his urging his claim to what the Church of Rome had formerly usurped from his predecessors. He has shown that he thinks nothing *holy* but the holy Roman empire. It is the nature of the Church and the Sceptre to league against the rest of mankind, and abet each other till they have engrossed everything: then they quarrel; and the mighty strips the weaker, as our Henry the Eighth did. One can care little about the upshot of such squabbles. Were I to form a wish, it would be in favour of the Pontiff rather than of the Emperor; *as Churchmen make conquests by sense and art, not by force and bloodshed, like Princes.*

As I have not been in London for this month till last night, I am utterly unqualified to send you news, if there are any. The Parliament is still sitting on the Irish propositions, which, I believe, are almost settled on this side of the Channel. Then they are to be sent to Dublin; and, if accepted there, the English Parliament is to meet again in October to ratify them. In the mean time politicians will do nothing but kill partridges.

[1] Mr. James Mann, mentioned in a preceding letter.—WALPOLE.

[2] Daughter of General Græme, and wife of the second Viscount Hampden.—WALPOLE.

[3] Wife of the second son of the first viscount: Mr. Trevor was envoy to Turin.—WALPOLE.

[4] Sir H. Mann had told Mr. Walpole that the emperor had acquired three millions by the suppression of convents.—WALPOLE.

The Balloonomania is, I think, a little chilled, not extinguished, by Rozier's catastrophe. That it should still blaze in my nephew [Orford] is not surprising; not that he has mounted himself,—he did threaten it: but real madmen are not heroes, though heroes are real madmen. He did encourage another man, who, seeing a storm coming on, would have desisted: but my Lord cried, "Oh! you had better ascend before the storm arrives," and instantly cut the strings; and away went the airgonaut, and did *not* break his neck!

The Duchess Dowager of Portland[1] is dead; by which the Duke, her son, gets twelve thousand pounds a year. The greatest part of her great collection will be sold.

This is all I have to tell you or your nephew; and, little as it is, I send it away to express my satisfaction on your having the gout in your limbs, rather than wait for more matter, which probably I should not have soon. I repeat my earnest desire to you to keep your limbs warm. You will tell me perhaps that the season of the year makes that counsel unnecessary. I mean, that you should be very careful not to check perspiration. I am perfectly recovered from my last fit; and am persuaded you will be so too, if you let the gout take its full career. It comes exactly to offer you health; and, as your feet swell, I presume upon easy terms. I have so good an opinion of the gout, that, when I am told of an infallible cure, I laugh the proposal to scorn, and declare I do not desire to be cured. I am serious; and, though I do not believe there is any cure for that distemper, I should say the same if there were one, and for this reason: I believe the gout a remedy, not a disease; and, being so, no wonder there is no medicine for it—nor do I desire to be cured of a remedy. Adieu!

[1] Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles Harley, widow of the second, and mother of the third Duke of Portland. She was only child of Edward, second Earl of Oxford, by the sole daughter and heiress of the last Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, from whom she inherited that great estate. She had made a vast collection of natural history and various other curiosities, the greater part of which was sold by auction in the year following.—WALPOLE. The last Cavendish is a slip of the pen for the last Holles.—CUNNINGHAM.

END OF VOL. VIII.

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